THE THRONE OF GRACE

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

H. R. Burton

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The Throne of Grace

A Volume of Personal Prayers with a Prelude

By
WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

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PRELUDE

THE THRONE OF GRACE

THE Bible is so full of strange and mighty thoughts that a reader is fairly bewildered in the luxuriance. I have observed that a single violet gives all the wonder of innumerable violets. When I lean and brush aside those sweet green violet leaves—which no one can describe and do them justice—and, leaning close, find quite hidden till the search reveals one lone, lovely violet, I cannot but feel that I have had the thrill of a hillside full of them when the spring is wide and wild. In late autumn, when we do not look to see a flower, I rummage among the late greens (for violets stay green late, and under withered leaves scarcely loosing their green tinted with autumnal crimson or gold), and when one lone violet, aspiring for the spring when Spring is far away, shines out, there is a witchery as indelible as joy in that one lone flower.

Not that that lessens all that blue beauty which a hundred violets hold. One cannot have too much blue sky, nor too many violets, although it is a well-accredited artistic consideration that a framed sky as from a window, or through an arch of an old wall, or seen through an opening in the wood, is more appealing and vivid because it is a lessened view and not a lessened loveliness. I have an old, old Greek vase, a little thing taken from ancient scoriæ of a buried city, and in this I love to put a single violet. One is enough. To tell of the fact, it is lovelier than many violets—

one Greek vase, long severed from its ancient home, and one lone violet always at home anywhere through all the ages. One Greek vase and one violet is simplicity of loveliness of the antique coupled with the definite simplicity of a flower, azured like the sky, which makes a perfection of beauty out of which God shines.

An isolated flower accentuates the loveliness itself is possessor of. So with Scripture. Scriptures are wonderful like the violets. The profusion creates confusion. As a pine tree on a solitary hillside stands lord of the mountain, because of its solitude, so a Scripture, plucked from its neighborliness to contiguous majesties, gets a prominence by that solitude. Great passages are immersed in great passages as mountain peaks in the Himalayas are subtracted from by eminence of other stupendous altitudes, whereas a single spire like Tacoma owns the land and sky and sea.

Thus must we, and may we, in our more wistful spiritual moods catch scriptures away from their landscape to let them have room to king it over our thoughts.

I will isolate this scripture lost or nearly lost in the climb of mountains—"The throne of grace."

To use Whittier's phrase, "I bow my forehead in the dust," before that thought. There is grace: there is a throne: and there is a throne of grace.

That winged phrase summarizes the gospel. I know no identificational clause that goes more to the heart of our Christian memories than this. Aforetime we heard a trembling or steady voice in prayer saying, "We approach the throne of grace with humility and joy." It is a moving sentiment on which we do well to gladly, greatly, gratefully ponder.

Thrones have not often been seats of grace. The world's thrones have always driven men from

them. That is their damnation; it will be their overthrow. They were seats of domination, of iron rule, of brusque and relentless authority. They symbolized the might that does not care and never sheds a pitying tear. They were ruthlessness armed with a sword that never sought scabbard. Men were scared to even approach a throne. The way of access was trembling. They came by the way of their fears; and well they might, for they were in a fair way to shake hands with death; and they knew it.

In the "Good News (gospel)" whereof Christ was Apostle, Prophet, Priest, and King, a melody immortal emanated from a throne which was so stately as to stir the world's imagination as well as the world's heart; and it was "The throne of grace." Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, not tremblingly but rejoicingly, not sedately but singingly, not hesitatingly but hasteningly; for there is a seat of power not fearful with the sword but gentle with the outreached hand of God. Not hurt at the throne but helped at the throne, for behind the throne of grace is the cross of God.

I confess this consideration sweeps hard over every harp string in my soul. It drops melody into every quiet nook in my heart. It trumpets peace into every surging ocean of my soul.

Life needs grace. We cannot go on our record. The record is the last bit of evidence we need brought into court. It goes dead against us. Death lieth that way and the forsaken land. Our own hearts, if they be not very callous, know that we have made a botch of character. We have not so played on the lute of life as to effect music. We have made jargon, and a vile, tumultuous discord like heathen minstrelsy. What we may legitimately look for is not plaudit but portent. My soul knows that: your soul knows

that. We cannot argue with our past, or against it, much less for it. It has gone from us like lightning from a cloud, and there is no remedy. No repentance can recall it nor heal the cruel cut the lightning made. "We have all sinned and come short"—that is the fiery indictment before which the world of women and men must crouch in dismayed, dry-lipped silence. We are undone. The day of doom is near. The sword is at the throat. Our respite is short. And then—"The throne of grace!"

O blessed gospel for the scared, scarred, scathed soul! It outminstrels the winds in the pines. We need it infinitely, infinitely. We had it not: we have it. Stretch out thy hand, my soul; smile, my heart; sing, my lips; rejoice with clarion ecstasy, all my being, for I have access. A throne of grace is near. If I fall, I fall toward it. If I run, I run toward it. If I stumble, I stumble toward it. If I fail, I fail toward it. No priest, no extreme unction, solely extreme grace! The "chief of sinners" (and any of us might apply for a diploma bearing that grim inscription) here finds not hell but heaven, not despair but sunny hope and springtime weather, not a grim garment of shame, but the snow-white apparel of salvation. The "blood of the Lamb" is a theme much talked of among the redeemed. Greatly needed but greatly had, thank God, greatly had!

We are tramping through muddy weather, not toward a new slough of despond, but toward an inextinguishable joy—"the throne of grace."

Hear the brave music through—

"Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been

in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."

This is the music not of the seraphim but of the redeemed. Run boldly—with a song!

Prayer is approach and access to the throne of grace. "That we may obtain mercy." Aye, but to the sin-marked and sin-scarred that is exceeding help. We have need to obtain mercy. The mercy seat is an old refuge to which people have run too seldom and have need to frequent. It must become a familiar place. We must obtain mercy. "Mercy, O my God;" and a voice saying, "Behold the throne of grace." Grace sitteth here, not with a scepter but with a naked, nail-pierced hand to reach, to bless, to save. When men know not they need mercy, they are crass, coarse as a garment of camel's hair. All folk of fine feeling know their deepest need is mercy. "Obtain mercy!"

And praying is approach to the throne of grace, the region of forgiveness, the place of cleansing, the House of the New Start, the altar of the regenerated, and the chance once more. Mercy puts us on our feet, and then at the throne of grace we may find help for every time of need.

The road is prayer. The place is the throne of grace. Help to bring us on the upward road; help to strengthen the hands that hang down; help to put reinvigorated hands to work once more in God's gardening, God's masonry, God's artistry, God's husbandry, God's healing; help to front the east and not the west; help to kindle new fires on desolate hearths of burnt-out purpose; help to measure our labor by our immortality and to gauge our effectiveness by the

strenuosity of God and have abundant access and abundant life. Where shall all this high-musicked minstrelsy be achieved? At the throne of grace. At the throne of grace we get grace and forgiveness. At the throne of grace we have grace and cleansing. At the throne of grace we have grace and mercy. At the throne of grace we have grace and "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we have grace and gladness and here we have grace and glory. At the throne of grace! Prayer gets to the throne of grace whence no sinner goes unpardoned away, where no wounded conscience goes wounded away, but where our wounds are stanched and where our hurts are healed and where our sin is pardoned and where we learn a new song written solely for the redeemed of the Lord. There is a throne of grace, thank God! A sunny place in sunless weather is "The Throne of Grace."

My soul, give thyself to prayer. Find the way to the throne of grace. Dwell at this sacred mount where the holy folk of all the ages have assembled and where they hold choral conversation.

Where mercy is to be found and help is to be had, and when failure need never visit us with its dismay we take the heat with its astounding drought. The mercy seat! The throne of grace —there may I live, there die, for mercy holds deathless holiday on that exultant hill that outtops eternity.

PRAYERS IN WAR TIME

A SOLDIER'S PRAYER

LORD, Thou seest how I am a soldier for my country and for Thee. It is Thy battle I am in. I feel the thrill of it. Thou art Thyself a Soldier and a Captain, the Captain of Salvation. I am fighting for the salvation of the world. Thou wilt give me help, that I know right well. I, a soldier, come to Thee, the Soldier, praying for help to be the soldier I ought to be. Help me, my Captain, to be valiant, chaste, considerate, humane, manly, a son not ashamed when he meets his mother and his father when the battle is done, and a soldier not ashamed to meet his God. Bless my dear native land, and help me to fight with valor for its safety, its health, its perpetuity; and if I die fighting, bring me, by Thy grace, to Thyself in heaven, I pray in Christ, my Saviour. Amen.

A PRAYER IN WARTIME

LORD OF BATTLES, we bow before Thee. We know not how to fight. Thou art the Captain. Thy might has armies that we know not of. Legions of angels stand with shields uplifted and swords drawn at Thy command. Lord, enlist them all in the battle for the world's health, help, cleansing.

We hear the roar of guns and the ping of bullets and hear the whir of the flying eagles of the fight

as they swim swift across the sky and peer into the trenches' throat; and we know not where next to turn or where to go. We are as men waking from a horrid dream and we have not the lift of frame to bring us into the sky where we can descry the sweep of the battle. We see it in petty fragments of torn flesh and bleeding men; but Thou seest the vast sweep of it and knowest where to strike and where effective blows may thunder and redound to Thy glory and the liberation of the world.

We bless Thee that Thou art the Lord of Hosts and hast battled, and wilt. Break not Thy sword across Thy knee until wickedness is defeated and shame is made to blush and restitution is wrought out; and *then* bring that peace which passes all understanding and widens beyond all our poor expectations, we pray in the Name which Avails. Amen.

THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER

WHEN the world boils like a sea at tempest what shall the earth do? How shall it keep on its pilgrimage being so sorely molested? This my soul requires of Thee, O Lord God of my life and my salvation. When fury is prevalent, when the foundations are removed, when the sturdy hills heave as tossing bits of foam, when the centuries of civilization seem about to be swallowed up in an orgy of anarchy, license, murder, horror, what shall the outraged world do?

There is only one answer that ever my soul has heard; and it has listened intently and with a wildly fluttering heart like a wounded bird. The answer is, My soul, trust thou in the Lord. He is thy safety, thy fortress, thy defense. Stay steady in Him, for so canst thou and in no otherwise, so only; for the Lord who made the world

can steady it in unsteady times, keep it from wreck in turbulence, bring it on surely to its highest dreams of highest hope.

God only steadies the soul of man and the soul of the world. The more the elements rage, the calmer the world may be, for God is not in this world only. He is above it. He presides over it rather than lives in it. He is above principalities and powers. He is the unalarmed and unperturbed God. So the earth may be unalarmed in God, its Maker and Redeemer. Thank God, the Almighty, for this rest unspeakable in Christ. Amen.

WE HAVE HAD GREAT TIMES OF BATTLE AND OF PEACE

LORD, God Almighty, when we were young life seemed a far journey; and now when we are grown older, life seems a short journey, only now we know that our life travel is not till death does trip us up but is a journey through eternity. We have youth, resistless, radiant, morning-crowded, rushing toward us to take us in its sunrise embrace. We thank Thee that we find the farther we go the brighter and sweeter the going. The road has fatigued but satisfied. We have seen much and suffered much, howbeit not so as to bleaken the way nor cloud the light. We have had great times of battle and of peace. We have walked through fogs and waded through surges and have found it all an enticement. And this day we tender thanks for what we have encountered, what we have endured, what we have enjoyed, what we have omitted, and for the high participations of life which have swung a flag in our sky, which the winds caught and held with folds all skyward. What a happy rejoicing, human

time we have had. And the end is not yet, only beginning! Get us in good trim for eternity, we pray in Christ. Amen.

MEN EXTEMPORIZE THE HEROIC

LORD of men, I am daily fronting the spectacle of bravery in everyday men and women. I want to bless Thee for it. The spectacle is sublime. And Thou art at the root of it; and it defies wonder. How many daily do things of note, which, if put into books, would read like "Froissart's Chronicles"! The roots of men are sunk into God so that if men will give way to themselves they will unconsciously do things that have the tang of God. How good it is! How it redeems the race! How our blood exults to see the common man and woman do uncommon things, unconscious as the wild flower is of its blooming! Men extemporize the heroic. Man speaks, and it is oratory. He sings, and it is an oratorio.

I bless Thee for this revelation. Keep it ever before my vision, so I may not forget of what stock I am, never forget that mighty matters are resident in my soul and should work out in my life. By Thy help they will and shall in Christ. Amen.

I NEED CAPTAINCY

LORD, Thou art my Captain. And I need captaincy. I am not adequate for my own soul. I am surfeited with my own inadequacy. Thou alone canst help it. In the fight of the soul I know the battle and am not inclined to be remote from it, nor am I quite a coward. In me is a manly touch of courage. I rejoice in that. I do not whimper; I am not a poltroon, nevertheless, how to order my fight is not in me. The enemies are

many and valiant and torrential in onslaught. I am but a common soldier. I need captaincy. I must have a Chief Captain to lead me. Come into my fight, my Captain. I will march where Thou leadest. It is leadership I lack. I have seen others fail unled or misled. I myself have so failed. I bless Thee that Thou art valiant, fearless, undefeated, undismayed. Nothing dims the glow of Thy triumph. Seeming defeat but prepares Thee for amazing victory. I need Thee lest the clamor dismay me, lest the hosts trample me under foot, lest I fight amiss or am spent with fatigue, lest I die of thirst and loss of blood. But I want to fight manfully. O manliest Man our race has ever had, lead me! Thy banners on the wind I can see. Thy right hand holding sword makes battle shout for joy and hurries battle toward victorious peace. Chief Captain of my soul, let me not be overwhelmed nor dismayed by the battle nor wounded to the death. Captain me up the Calvary Hill and to the heavenly hill, I pray in Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER OF A SOLDIER'S WIFE

LORD, my Lord, I am a soldier's wife. Thou knowest that without my telling. I just like to say it to my God. It makes me brave to endure separation and the bite of fear to tell God, my God, my husband's God, that I am a soldier's wife.

I must be brave, but my tears will come in spite of me. Is that wrong in me, or weak? Thou knowest. Thou wilt not chide me. Thou hast made me a woman, and love is so cruel to a woman's heart. Love hurts so. I love him and want him. Thou knowest, but I tell Thee. How he smiled when he kissed me good-by and called me his "brave darling." I want him.

But, my Father, keep him for me; and if he should die fighting, keep me for him. The time will not be overlong. The parting will end in that sweet meeting in everlasting life. My little daughter and his, I heard saying to a little playmate girl, "My papa is over there," and she waved her little hands out across the sea.

I thank Thee my husband is a soldier for Thee and for all good things for which Jesus died. I know that some must fight and some must die and that this war for the world's redemption is an adventure of the lifetime of the world and must be fought to a righteous finale. And in that brave battle my brave husband is.

Keep him Thy soldier and my soldier and his little daughter's soldier and his country's soldier till the war is over and Right stands victorious with bloody sword ready for the sheath, and keep me a worthy, watching, chaste, and smiling soldier's wife until that day, I pray in Christ. Amen.

PRAYER OF A SLAIN SOLDIER'S PARENT

MY Father in heaven, Thou seest how bereft I am and sore at heart even unto death. My son is slain in battle, my sweet, brave, bonnie son whom I cuddled and kissed, laughed over, wept over, prayed over—O my son, my son!

How I have lived for him! And now I must live without him. How can I live? If I could die, I would die smiling. I could then go to him. But neither my birthday nor my death day are in my command. I am Thine. Thou didst usher me into life and Thou must usher me out. I am in Thy hands whether or not.

But I gladly belong to Thee. I can trust Thee, though I cannot trust myself. And here in the

hot noon of my adversity, in loss unutterable, in my grieving that grips me with fiery fingers, I rush to Thee. My help cometh from the Lord, my God and Father.

I rejoice that my son died for the freedom of the world. It was no feverish, fickle battle he fought in, one for boundaries or commerce. It was that the world might live, might be decent, might pray, might be father and mother, sweetheart and lover, worshiper in cathedral or little church without the intrusion of brutalities or the destruction of the house of prayer. He fought for the world's civilization, that it should not perish from the earth; for freedom, that it might endure; for America and the whole earth, for Christianity and the brave battle Christ.

Help that the high sacrificial death of my dear boy buoy me up. He has not died in vain. He only has died soon, in the morning rather than at the night.

All's well with him. He loved Thee. He trusted in Thee. My last letter from his brave hand said how safe and brave he felt in Christ. With him he felt no fear and signed himself, "Your son, a soldier of the United States."

O my son, my brave son, I love Thee now, and in Christ I love Thee forever! But my heart aches out loud. Help me, O my Father.

And I recall that Thou hadst an only, well-beloved Son to die. Thank God. Amen.

A PRAYER OF A SOLDIER'S CHILDREN

OUR father's God and ours, we pray to Thee. Thou art the Father nearest us now; for our earthly father is where his voice, should it call to us as it used to do, could not be heard though we were near. And he is so far. When he

writes us, his letter is long in arriving; and we know that he might be slain and we not know it for days after.

So we neighbor with Thee. Thou art our heavenly Father, to Whom we bring our earthly father. As he was wont to carry us in his arms when we were little or sleepy or sick, so now we, his children, left alone this side the great sea, carry our father in the arms of our prayer to Thee his Father and our Father.

We pray for our daddy, our dear daddy. We love him so. We miss him so. We want him so; and he is fighting, so that we and all children of everybody may have a safe and happy childhood undismayed by fears. He told us this when he was starting for battle; but we could hardly hear his words we were crying so, and his words shook a little like a leaf with rain upon it.

We bless Thee, our Father in heaven, that we have a brave father who is not afraid to fight and not afraid to die, and who is a Christian father; and mother reads to us in Pilgrim's Progress about "Brother Valiant" and says that is our father; and then she stops reading for weeping, then we weep too; and then we all pray for daddy and want him back again.

Keep him while away fighting and bring him back again to us when the fight is over, or bring us to him some time in heaven if he falls fighting. We are scared about him and come to Thee to have our fears hushed and our tears wiped away, and to take our shelter on Thy heart, as we did on daddy's when he was here.

Hear our prayer, our Father and his Father, and help us to be good children while he is gone, and help us to study hard and do as he told us, mind mother while he was away, and pray for him as we always do even when we are at play. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE BATTLE-BEREFT

LORD, we bless Thee that to our knowledge and to the knowledge of very many, Thou art the God of all comfort. So many need what Thou alone canst give. There is great need of Thee these battle days of bereftness and the broken heart.

We pray for the bereft, for those whom the sword has wounded in the heart. Those who have died in making the world worth-while—for them we do not pray. We can risk them with Thee alone. We leave them there with comfort.

But we humbly though urgently pray for such as have had loved ones die in camp or prison or battlefield of land or sea or sky. They are very many in this sad though triumphant day.

We bless Thee that we know that tears have a surgery very beneficent; and when grief sits on the doorsteps with both cheeks held in wet hands, make Thou those tears medicinal and remedial. May they wash the soul so that earth dust may be purged away so that looking up they may see Thy face.

We bless Thee for that comfort wherewith we know those bereft hearts have been solaced, for a soldier's father has written, "Our son was in the hands of his country and his Lord, and we make no complaint." Blessed be God for such a trust and for such hearts and for such a God to whom we can implicitly leave us and ours.

And, then there is such hope at the deathbed and beyond the grave in Thee. O bless Thy holy name!

A dying soldier (by whose bed his father sat weeping yet rejoicing in his Christian soldier boy) said, sleepily, "Kiss me good night, daddy, kiss me good night." And the father leaned down and kissed the lad, saying, "Good night, son." And

then the soldier son was with his heavenly Father who kissed him good morning.

For this wide and sweet consolation of Thy grace and benediction and presence, for the peace ineffable, we bless Thee with full hearts in Christ. Amen.

A SOLDIER'S PRAYER FOR THOSE AT HOME

MY God and Father, I make my advance to Thee. With Thee is no retreat. Always, forward marching brings me to Thy warrior heart.

Thou seest me, a soldier, far from my home and loved ones. They are there; I am here. I am fighting for them; they are living for me. I cannot father my children, cannot kiss them good night or good morning now. Do Thou bid them good night for me. Hallow their slumbers and their awakening. May they learn, though little, to live to Thee. Be present in their play, and prayer, and school. While they miss me may they find Thee, their Heavenly Father, near and dear.

Bless my wife. She is so dear to me, never so dear as now. She misses me as I miss her. Tears are dried on some of the words in her dear letters to me. I cannot kiss her because she is so far away, but do Thou give her Thy company and comfort. Make long days seem short to her while we are parted. May she not neglect family prayer with the children nor churchgoing. May she know what communion with God really means as she has not known it hitherto.

Then, my heart runs out to my father and mother. By my love to my children I begin to guess their love to me. May I be worthy of their sweet solicitude and tutelage, and never do aught

to baffle the rich askings of their prayers. At battle or bivouac I feel the prayers and love of these, my beloved, and I pray that they and I may be worthy in some poor way of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Amen.

A PRAYER THE SUNDAY OF THE GREAT GERMAN DRIVE IN MARCH, 1918

O GOD, our Help not in ages past but now, we are so crushed with this mighty tide of apparently resistless war that we can scarcely breathe. Our words stammer like wounded and falling soldiers. "Their waves are gone over us" is the sobbing cry of our half despair. Wherever we look we hear and see the onward rush of an enemy to mankind flushed with blood as wine and rude and huge in its overwhelming might, where all physical circumstances seem to have conspired to their help until some good folks fairly shriek out that God is on the side of Germany, forgetting that God always stays on His own side and never falls to the help of violaters of the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. "Where is now their God?" is what the swords of evil victory seem to clamor till we are drenched with the horrid oratory like a drench of blood.

We know Thee, that is the only Temperer of our tempest. We believe in God as we were bidden by Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord.

In this exigent hour of human destiny we cannot see, and we cannot trust our ears, but we are trusting our hearts in their holding fast to God. We believe God will not let righteousness die out of history nor decency be slain at its own doorstep. Thou dost sway the future. We believe it of Thee. And in this hour when the world staggers like a rocking ocean and when the heavens

chatter like a maniac's babble we stay our hearts on the living God, our God of battles.

We believe we are on Thy side. Bless England, great, intrepid England; and France, great, strenuous France; and grim Italy, fighting like eagles of the Alps; and forgive America that she is not there, and spare the battle a little longer till we are come to stand with those brave defenders of the world. Nobody can save this battle now save Thyself. "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered," we pray in the name of Him Who will not let unrighteousness seize the scepter of the world. Amen.

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING WHEN OSTEND WAS EVACUATED

PRAISE God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below! We are one voice of triumphant thanksgiving. Our hearts out-trumpet trumpets. After more than four bloody years, when rapine, lechery, diabolism, swaggered day and night over every way and by-way and through palace and hovel, when virtue's blushes burned out, and innocence forgot to smile, and human rights were as dung, after ruin and murder had preempted every sword and granary, and when God seemed to have become lenient to swagger and loot and lust and foulness, then at last our God took a hand and turned our captivity until we are as those that dream.

The mighty advance, whereat our hearts trembled like falling towers, has eventuated in ruin to those who made that charge; and now ship and undersea ship and gun and cannon and man and army and navy have faded away like an angry cloud, and once again the citizens see their own flag floating and hear their own army marching

and walk untimorously on the city streets. Their Lord had delayed his coming, but He came. The Lord of Hosts may be relied on to hold the balance of power and to wield scepter of righteousness still.

We bless Thee that our reliance on Thee was not in vain. We have not been confounded. History was only wounded, not slain. To-morrow lifts its dayspring to the heavens. The grass shall grow again and cattle pasture by the streams and little children nestle down in mother arms to sleep and awake unaffrighted. Blessed be God, who still reigns and brings the doings of the heathen to naught.

Help us to be holy folk, that we may not be entirely unworthy these Thy very great mercies. May Belgium be God's land; and may all the ransomed portions of the earth set up their altars to the everlasting God, who will bring the devices of the wicked to naught and set the righteous in the high places, and place the meek where kings were wont to sit. To our God be praises everlasting in Christ the Redeemer. Amen.

A NEW BOOK OF EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

LORD OF NATIONS AND MEN, we greatly believe in Thee. Thou hast wrought wondrously. Thou hast triumphed over wickedness and hast brought righteousness out like the noonday.

We bless Thee for that, though hidden from our eyes, Thou hast been taking charge of our armies, navies, generals, and fighting men, and women and men in house and field and factory, making their efforts to conspire with Thyself to bring about a righteous victory, to issue in a righteous and enduring peace.

We bless Thee for this new book of evidences of Christianity in which we have the assurance greatly assured that God is in His heaven and things therefore will get right in the world.

For thy Captaincy and triumph and the promise therein given that Thou wilt not forsake the world Thou hast made and redeemed, we render Thee most hearty thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER OF PRAISE THAT MAN IS COME TO HIS SOVEREIGNTY

LORD OF MAN, we bless Thee that we have lived in this day—this day of the revelation of man in his majesty and man subject of redemption and participator in the saving of the world.

We thank Thee that we are with our eyes beholding what the prophets watched for wet-eyed and dreamfully and saw not, while we their successors see it, though with us it breaks like a dawn of eternity. The skies are rent with hallelujahs. The earth rocks with the onset of armies. The land is sowed and plowed and reaped not by underlings, but overlings. Man has come to his appointed hour of God. All labor becomes of more consequence than the lineages of kings and the sorry story of other and bruised days. The man who works and the woman who works are seen to be the helpers of the world. Work has become an apocalypse and common men are seen uncommon and gigantic. Men have sprung forth heroes on every battlefield. It is Thy doing. We are glorified of Thee. We see how Christ died for all men, that all men might be equals. Thou wast right: human history and procedure were wrong, shamefully and sullenly wrong. Thy way was the way

of the soul, and on the heights where deathless glory wakes, there stands man.

We are learning now something of the meaning of that brave phrase of Jesus the Christ, "A day of the Son of man." We praise Thee for the vision. It is a grander sunup than ever earth knew save only when there dawned on us the Christ.

Lord, help us not to be decoyed into misunderstanding of this high event. Keep us from the poor logic of thinking man has wrought this deliverance. Help us to see the Lord of man and to keep forever before our enraptured understanding that the Son of man is the lifter up of man.

Help this exultant man, this world man to be God's man, lest he shame his high estate by trailing a royal banner in the dust. Help this exultant son of man, this interracial giant, to fall in love with Jesus Christ the Lord, and may there hereafter be no color line nor whisperings of superior and inferiors, but only a world call with a world voice: "OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME." Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FIRESIDE

A PRAYER OF HAPPY PARENTS

OUR kind heavenly Father, we who are become parents, bless Thee that our little lad is sound in body, strong in limb, and without blemish of any kind. It is so sweet to have it so. It is so good not to have him deformed but wholesome and comely. We bless Thee that his smile is so sweet, and that his cooing is like a wild bird's note. It is a blessing to look at him asleep or awake. The dear, solemn eyes which peer at us and will in due time recognize us, we bless Thee for their sweet innocence.

May we be blessed of God in living clean, kindly, gracious Christian lives, so that our son may grow up to know God through us, we ask in the name of our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus, Lover of little bits of children and grown-up folks. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR BELOVEDS

OUR Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. We stretch our hands and hearts to Thee for our Beloveds. Our children are scattered. The nest once full of singing birds is now desolate as a winter's nest. No child calls through all the house. The house is quiet, and that quiet eats into our hearts like a fire. We want their voices and them; their little voices, childish treble filled with music, and we want their romp

and loud school calls. We want their voices of youth and maid at college days; we want them at all ages in all our rooms; and they are in no rooms. All's still!

God have pity on our lonesomeness, for hast not Thou been lonely for Thy only and Well-Beloved Son! We are lonely. Our hearts cry out while our eyes are like rainy skies—

"O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still."

We want them so; and we pray Thou wilt hold them in Thy heart. Thou art where we would fain have them be. Take them into the comfort of Thy love. May they with Thee be as one whom his mother comforteth. We pray they may be good; we pray we may be good. We want a lasting home, to be kept together in the housekeeping of eternity.

Let us live there together in the long summer of Heart's Desire satisfied by being all together with our Father which art in heaven, at home—at home in Christ. Amen.

GOD, THE HOME HEARTH OF THE HEART

LORD, my train is swinging swiftly on. The hamlets and the farmsteads are like leaves driven on a hurrying blast. The corn is in the shock; the cattle wind toward the streams; the trees are splendrous with autumnal glory; the east is gray and the night comes on. Soon the lights will twinkle with the sense of home and the family meal where father and mother and children gather for supper and good-night. Soon darkness will be over all; and the rain is falling!

I love to think on such a journey and at such an hour that Thou art the home hearth of my heart. My journey is with Thee, and in its wildest rush and tumult I feel at home. On my rushing train I have vast tranquillity as one who sleeps with head upon a father's arm. Thou art my God and I bless Thee. Amen.

PRAYER AT A GOOD MAN'S DEATH

LORD, heavenly King, we thank Thee that we are assembled in Thy presence to see one of Thy servants set out to sea. We are in a mood of gurgling laughter. We are not come to weep. No tears gather in our hearts, this happy hour.

This son of Thine was so eager to be gone—to be with Thee. Thou knowest. He was fair homesick for Thy face. He has been waiting this good while to go out and live in Thy immediate neighborhood. He has often said so. He has suffered much without any mark of complaint. Thou wast his comfort. Many a sleepless night has he smiled through till dawn because Thou didst keep watch with him. "Go to sleep," he would often say to the watcher. "God will bide with me through the night." He was a good friend of Thee and Thou the best Friend to him. It is very blessed how God keeps those who rely on Him.

He was long while in setting sail. He could not lift the anchor. He must needs wait the tide. And in due time he saw Thee coming bringing Thy tide for him. How sweetly he lies smiling as if a lamp lit his dear face. And he is smiling. Why should we wonder at that? He saw Thee coming with Thy tide for him.

Now, we humbly bless Thee for this privilege of coming to see him set sail. We dare not weep. We do not weep. We laugh and sing, "O grave,

where is thy victory?" He has the Resurrection and the Life to sail his frail bark out to the harbor named Eternal Life.

We bless Thee, O Christ. Amen.

WE PRAY FOR OUR CHILDREN

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, we praise Thee for our children and pray for them. Thou who art our Father and Mother knowest how fathers and mothers love. Our father and mother hearts are fashioned after Thine. We be Thy kinsfolk. That spaciousness of affection wherewith we love our children Thou understandest. Our hearts fairly break for the love we have for our dear daughters and sons. It is a wide passion that is in our hearts for our beloveds. We cannot utter it in words nor quite in deeds. We muse on our children. They cluster about every lit fire of our hearts. Their sleepy voices, their wailing cries, their ringing laughter, their romp, their schoolhouse talk, their college dreams, their life plans, their sorrows, their difficulties, their successes, their loves, their losses—how our hearts ache or sob or sing with them all, our dear, dear children!

And we long to be with them in their aspirations and failures, and to be near to take their heads on our hearts; and then we think with a choke of the throat that some day we shall not be here with them. They must or sigh or sing alone as for us.

But, Lord, Thou wilt be their Father as Thou hast been ours. Blessed be Thy blessed name. We rest in that wide comfort. We bless Thee for that safe haven. Thou wilt be their God and Father as all this while Thou hast been ours. They shall not be orphans in a heartbreaking way. Divine comfort shall put its wing across their

loneliness. Thou wilt not let them sit down at a comfortless meal nor eat their hearts out with despair. We greatly bless Thee for this mercy.

So, Lord, bless our children. May they love Thee all day and all days. May they love Thy church and live in it as their father and mother did. May they succor every good design. May they delight themselves in God. May they earn money for humanity and God. May they be kept from the rust that gathers so readily on the sword of the soul—from self and selfish uses. May they ever consider themselves as members of the society of the sons of men and mingle gladly with their brothers and sisters. May God be in all their thoughts, and may they companion with the living Christ, and may they come some time, some happy time, to dwell with Thee and us in the heavenly habitations, we pray in Christ. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF A VERY LITTLE CHILD

GOOD CHRIST, I am a very little child. I can scarcely talk well. I cannot read the Bible book at all, so mamma reads it to me; and she read of how Thou wast thyself once a little child like me.

That was so good to hear. I loved it, and had mamma stop reading to let me think of it. Once Thou couldst not read either and once Thy mamma took Thee up a-weary and sang Thee to sleep against her breast as my mamma does me. You were sleepy too, and may be at your prayer you fell asleep, as I do sometimes at mine, and mamma finishes my prayer for me; and did your mamma finish your prayer for you, and if she did, you won't think I am naughty when I fall asleep at prayer, will you, good Christ?

My mamma says you are so good, and you are

God, and you love me. I think on that sometimes when I wake up at night and see a star; for she said you had a star in the east.

I want to be good and You will help me, won't You, O Christ? Please don't forget what I have said and bless my mamma. I have no papa. He lives with God some time now, but is lonesome for mamma and for me. Be good to papa up there with You until I and mamma come. You will, won't you, God Christ? I love You, and will love You more when I am bigger and my heart has more room. Amen.

I AM HEADED FOR HOME

FATHER in heaven, I bless Thee I am headed for home. Not going away from home but toward home, sweet home. My father is dead; my mother is dead. I yearn to see them, to touch their lips with mine, yet I am headed toward home. They are not here where the north wind blows, but there where for aye the south winds blow, bringing violets. They have their home in heaven with Thee. They had no stable habitation here, but both of them heard Christ say, "I go to prepare a home for you," and they trudged up and onward to be at home with God. There they stay without a care, and feel at home because they are in their Father's house. They dwell with God; and I, their son and thy son, am coming home. Keep me clean and white as summer clouds what time I trudge homeward, so that at evening when I come to the door and am greeted with a welcome smile of mother and father, my lips may be clean for my mother's kiss, and my heart may be cleansed for my heavenly Father's inspection, and may He bid me a smiling welcome home in Christ. Amen.

OUR CHILD IN HEAVEN

LORD of happy families, we are moved to bless Thee for our child in heaven. We do not pray for the dead, being long past that theological folly. They who are in heaven with the heavenly Father at their side need no prayer of ours. They have the Good Shepherd. He calleth them by their names. The rasp is out of their voices and the moth do not eat their shining garments. They are very safe with God.

But we praise Thee for the child we cannot see the face of now. We have wept much in secret for the dear lost lamb. Our night pillow has often been a pillow of dew. Our hearts ache so, and our hands reached out empty, empty, ever empty; and sometimes but for Thee and Thy comfort we had died of heartache. We miss the child now and shall all the time we are apart from that sweet beloved. Our hearts are still hearts that love and ache. Aching is part of our richest riches. We want the child so; and it cannot come to us. No calling in the day or dark can bring that bright wanderer to our door and through it to our table and our arms. Thou dost not chide our longing. Thou art the Father God and the Mother God. What comfort our hurt hearts find in that consideration! It is a balm of Gilead when we need balm most. Our praise is that our child when she could not stay with us could go to Thee. Thou didst not take the child from us but didst take the child for us. We could not keep our beloved. The long weeks of pain and drowsiness broke the silver cord. The child drifted from us like a boat adrift. A voice came to us like a remote thing, although the dear heart lay in our arms. We could not keep the child, and Thou wast beside us and didst take our beloved very gently in Thine arms schooled to bear witless lambs and

little children whose mothers and fathers committed them to Thy keeping—in those safe arms Thou didst take our weakling, with all strength forgot, to Thyself. Not in the graveyard, we know, not in God's acre, we know, but in the Everlasting Life we know our sweet child, greatly loved and greatly missed, is shepherded. So safe, so glad, so unaccompanied by fear or care or pain or woe! Blessed be God that we parents know where our child is and plays with shining face upon some instrument of music which Thou hast contrived. How our hearts rest in this comfort! Safe at home with our heavenly Father, no want not provided for nor purity of soul not gifted, no trouble of which she need be afraid. The sky, the infinite azure, the shining river, the paths among the woods—and all the way safe as if by angels guarded and God at hand. So, Lord, we make our praise when our hearts are full of yearning. Our child is with God. We make our way thither. We shall by and by invade that sacred calm and that ecstatic presence and find our lost child unsmirched, unsullied, and kept of God. So, when we weep in parental loneliness, we close our weeping with a song of praise to God who careth for us beyond all precedent of human care and folds us in the wide comfort of the everlasting peace in Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER OF PRAISE FOR CHILDREN

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, we out of our fatherhood and motherhood bless Thee for Thy surprising Fatherhood. We bless Thee for our children. They have been so sweet to cuddle and kiss, to watch with, to still the crying of in the dark, to feel them snuggle close in the night, sleepily saying, "Daddy, is you dere?" then

falling off again into happy slumber. It was so precious to have them from Thee, to know they are Thine, to know they are Thine first, ours afterward, to rest in the sweet assurance that all children are born saved of God, in the church, safe in the unmeasured love of Thy mercy and redemption, children of God, little tots of children of God, Thou and they and we one family. And when about our family altar we make our prayer, we join hands, Thou and they and we, one family in earth and heaven. We bless Thee that we have seen our children grow up like flowers, flowers of the field. They have not been angels, nor were their parents angels, but they have been sweetly human, humanly bad, but humanly precious. Their frets and faults have been human. Their woes, their cares, their studies, the schoolday worries, their sinfulnesses and forgetfulnesses all have been customary, but all were under Thy eye and under Thy blood. They had forgiveness with the Lord. They were such toddlers of human weakness and human gladness as to endear them utterly to our hearts. We kissed their fears away; we cuddled them in their frightful dreams by night; we gave them encouragement by day; we watched them work and sing and play and weep; we saw them through love's eyes. They were so beautiful to our mother-father eyes that we more than dimly guess how we, Thy children, must look to Thy fatherly eyes. We have seen them grow. Once they were babes, now are they come to be grown women and men. All their pilgrimage has been sweet to us. If at any time we have been tired, and we have; if at any time troubled, and we have; if at any time knowing not which way to turn, and we have; then we turned to Thee, our Father and their Father. We have prayed for them that their steps slip not, that their faith fail not, that their hearts keep purity

in manhood and womanhood as in childhood, only a grown-up purity. And when we shall fall on sleep, keep care and watch over our children who are Thy children. Steer them to the port where we pray by Thy grace our barks may land, the haven of eternal peace, where parents and children gather and regale their hearts on God and everlasting love in Christ. Amen.

BIDDING GOD GOOD NIGHT

MY FATHER, I am sleepy and tired, and I bid Thee good night. To have had Thee all day was better than winds or waters. And now I shall have Thee all night. I need not wake to keep Thee in my heart. I love Thee there where Thou art so welcomed, so loved, so worshiped.

Watch over me. I shall soon be fast asleep, but thanks to my heavenly Father I am as one whom His mother comforteth. So, Father, heavenly Father, good night. Amen.

A BOY'S PRAYER

OUR FATHER which art in heaven, I am one of Thy little boys freckled and barefoot and at play in the sun. I bless Thee I am a boy and may be a man some day, but while I am on the way, help me to be a good boy, joyous, singing, romping, clean in heart, generous in plan, thoughtful for others, helpful to my mother and tender with her, obedient to my father and grateful to him, diligent about my books and unselfish in my play. Make me a boy-boy, and some big day make me a man-man, so I may take my share in whatever comes to me, doing my part and doing it well, remembering I am the boy and the man of my Father which is in heaven, whom I wish to love and serve all my days as boy and man in Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS OF SEASONS AND DAYS

A MORNING PRAYER

O LORD, we are a company of sinners bowed with our faces dustward in Thy sight. This is not news to Thee. Thou knowest the pit from which we are digged; Thou knowest the poor dust of which we are compounded; Thou knowest we are sinners, but, O Lord, perchance if Thou wouldst look, Thou wouldst find tears in our eyes this morning. We are ashamed of what we have been. Every true heart is this morning. As the smoke and the incense with the smoke go heavenward, so our life would lift itself by reverence and love and hope for better things, to God.

We are ashamed of the way we have slighted Thee. Thou hast never slighted us, Thou hast been very sweet. Our mothers haven't taken care of us as Thou hast; our fathers haven't thought of us as Thou hast; nobody has loved us like God; nobody has been thoughtful for us like God; nobody has been on eternal vigil for us like God. He never let the fire go out in our winter; He never let the breeze drowse in our hot and dusty summer time; He never forgot us when we were sick; He never kept away from us when we were lonely; He never failed us when we were in mighty need; He never broke and ran away from us when our calamities rained on us like thunder bolts; He never laid up things against us; He never, when we came to Him, said, "Why did you come?" He never turned the cold shoulder on

us; but whenever we looked His way, however far we had been in sin, He was looking at us and smiling toward us a welcome, and beckoning, and we heard His voice saying, "Hurry up and come home."

O God, this morning, we bless Thee for what Jesus is: for His interpretation of life; for the great, growing wholesomeness of His character. Why, He perfumes the air of the centuries; why, He is like the growing of roses; He is like the odors that winds from over the valleys and mountains catch and puff in our faces forever. He loved us; He saw how weak we were; He took us by the hands when our hands were dirty; He was like some dear lover that took our two hands in two hands of His, and held them fast and looked into our face and said, "I have been looking for you a good while, and I am glad you have gotten back home"—and He leant and kissed us on the lips.

O precious Saviour, if we have ever shamed Thee, if we have forgotten Thee, if we have cared nought for Thee, if we have spurned Thee, if we have buffeted Thee in the face like the Roman soldiers did, if we have sold our right and our birthright for a mess of pottage, as many of us have, if we have had no hope for high things, and been groveling and insensate, O Lord, let Thy blood this morning wipe out the history and begin afresh with us. Lead us out into a big place. Fetch us out of our sins to God this morning.

Here we are: some of us don't care much about what people think, God pity us; some of us think too much about what people think, God pity *us;* some of us have moral flabbiness, *God pity us;* some people have moral perturbations which sin against God, God pity them; some of us have husky voices when we try to pray because we

haven't kept our voices clear by much speaking with God; some of us have broken purposes, and they are like a wasted life: some of us lack hope, and all our yesterdays cry, "Shame!" "Shame!" God pity us! Some of us had strength and virility and great nobilities and open conscience and wide-opened doors to truth, and great hospitalities to virtue, and the crying voice lifted to God. Our fathers and mothers taught us how to pray and read God's Book, so we didn't stumble in the reading, but we have *shut the book* and lost the place, and closed our lips and forgotten how to pray. O God, pity us! O speak to us this morning. Bring everybody a message; give everybody a broken heart. Amen.

HERE WE ARE A LITTLE WHILE

HERE we are a little while, and then we go. We shall not all come again to God's house any more, forever. O God, bring us to the big house with the "many mansions" and the wide-open doors on every side where the winds enter; and the south wind blows, and the west wind comes with balm of flowers and singing of birds upon its breast; and where the north wind comes with cooling in summer time; and the east wind flashes across the plains, morning and night. Bring us, O, God, up to the good House "not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

Bless all lonely and distressed; bless anybody that hasn't been at home for a long time. Bless people that are most loved and thought of; we pray for them; here they are in Thy house this morning, God bless them and give them good welcome here. Bless people that are away and cannot get back. There are people thinking about this house and would like to be here, and who are as

heart-sick for this place as a lover for his absent beloved, God bless them, stay pretty close to them. Some people are shut in hospitals; some are in sick rooms; some are blind, others are deaf. O God, speak to the deaf ears, and make the blind eyes see Thee. Where Thou art it is good company, and where Thou art they are having Sunday that shall not cease.

Hear our prayer; breathe in our faces saying, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost." Hear our outcryings, not because we are worthy, but because God loves us and listens to us, we ask in the name of the Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER AT NIGHT

O LORD, accept our praises to-night, because Thou art good and doest good, and because Thou art good to us and hast done good to us, and hast not forgotten us up to now. We love Thee for Thy conversation. We thank Thee for the many rivulets down which Thy mercy runs to our hearts. We thank Thee for the high mountains Thou hast planted in the landscape of our souls. When we are tired of the valleys then we lift our eyes to the everlasting hills; and if our hearts and eyes weary of the mountain fastnesses, then we look among the meadows where grow the grass and the corn, and there is the food for the earth. And it is Thine, and Thou hast given all Thy earth to us.

We bless Thee for Thy abundant grace. We thank Thee that though we have volcanoes in our blood, Thou art able to master our volcanoes and turn them into soil of our life out of which grow the vineyards of the world. We thank Thee that Thou art able to take us and use us to Thy service. We thank Thee that Thou art never indolent con-

cerning us but always glad to do us good; always careful to take our lives out of doors, out where people stay, out where crowds are multitudinous. We are built for each other. We are not to lead clandestine lives, but open lives under the deep blue of Thy sky.

O Lord of life and glory and Giver of every good thing of high design, equip us for the better life. Shame us out of our meanness and weakness; invite us out of our despair with ourselves; speak to every latent force that it be active and let it live in love and service. Give to every one of us the hot heart and the eager hand; and if we live in the city, may we be city citizens of the best order; and if we are dwellers in the country, may we be country dwellers of the best order. And if we are old, may we be beautiful old folks; and if we are young, may we be radiant young folks; and if we are in life's noon, may we love its sultry noon. Keep us all from the poor antagonism of the little heart. Keep us from the hot breath that panteth up the hill but beareth no burden. Keep us out in the open where there is room. If we are on the sea, give us sea room. If we are on the prairie, give us prairie room; if we are on the mountain, give us mountain room. Give us room in life, room in prayer, room in consecration. And when we come, as all of us shall some time come, to death, may we have room in death, and the open gate of the Saviour opening outward into everlasting life into the presence of God.

Bless all of our souls. Keep them clean; keep them right; keep them buoyant for God; keep them balanced; keep them generous and inclusive of others. Operate on us that we may not become rancid like spoiled oil, but keep us, we pray Thee, fragrant like the red clover blossoms in the month of June.

Bless our church life. May it be catholic yet strong, so that we shall not be anybodies or everybodies but somebodies in the Church of God.

And so consummate in us Thy high purposes, and give us the desire to live out of doors in Thy divine spaciousness. And hereafter, if we hear not each other's voice underneath this vault of blue and this canopy of stars, give us in the refreshment of this evening to go and stay with each other in that country where the day dawn lasts forever and forever, in Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR SATURDAY

LORD, the week, this week of Thine and mine, has stumbled toward its end. It is Saturday. Soon another week shall have stumbled into eternity. I grow wan as death in considering this weekly advent and this weekly disappearance in the wide sea of time. It hastes so, it stumbles so, it falters so, and yet all the while, without thought or with it, the week is heading straight into eternity. Time is the dust behind and under its hasting feet. The week is footing it toward the far-off event of my standing or falling prone before the presence of God. Saturday and then tomorrow, Sunday and a new week.

Alas, my Lord, how have I spent this week? What have I to show Thee to justify my occupying Thy days? Have I been prayerful, loving, world-mooded? Have I swept the landscape of the eternal with my eyes daily? Have I been near Thee and Thy purposes and have I shared in the sufferings of Christ to such extent as shall give my life edge, cunning, execution?

These are thoughts that burn. I know not how to answer any of them, but I bide in fear that Thy answer would abash me.

Howbeit I pray for the blood of Christ to wash my heart and cleanse this week so that its history touched with the redemptive blood may not shame me in the coming days but may beckon me with smiling. I pray in Christ. Amen.

A MID-AFTERNOON PRAYER

I WILL accost Thee, my God, mid-afternoon. Thou sleepest not of afternoons, nor art weary, but art out looking around about on Thy world and my world.

Before sunset many will die, some in the field, some on the battle ground, some giving birth to babes, some swimming mightily but futilely on wrathful seas.

Death cometh but need not affright. Night cometh but need not darken the sky. Suns set but need not go down, only climb out of the earthly nights.

In sunset, in death, in Christ, we may press our exultant way to sunrise eternal, to day that lasts, to life that has no call to die. Thank God. Amen.

WAITING FOR GOD'S RAIN

LORD, my lips are thirsty for the water of life. I am parched with my drought and feebly wait for Thy rain and for the gushing of Thy waterbrook. At the side of some Brook Cherith make me to sit in shadow filled with the brook's music-making murmur. The desert is near. Its glow burns up the sky to its summit, and where I am needs the water of life.

I inquired concerning this from many travelers, and where they said, I went, only to find a river channel dry and filled with blistering rocks or

sunburnt sand and all the rushes dead along the river rim. No willows greening and no bird at song. I made long quests, always asking "Knowest Thou where the rivers of running water are?" and always to unsuccess. Oft have I journeyed and to many wheres, but ever to sit down faint with thirst and nigh dead with drought. And *then* I came to the Fountain of Living Waters, since which time I have had bird song in green branches, and the rush of running babbling streams, and the sound of dawdling waters all the night to fill my dreams with music, and my lips leaned and drank, and the waters were cool and sweet and full of such refreshment whereof I had read but had not understood; and the name of this river was Christ. O river called Christ, flow along the dim landscape of my soul, be my boundary, my beauty, my preservation, my shadow in the streams, my Fountain of living waters. I shall not thirst forever.

O Christ, for what Thou art to me and mine and all besides who love Thee, I render thanks in Thine own name. Amen.

IN GOD IS ALL DAYLIGHT AND NO NIGHT

GOD of the morning light, I make my prayer to Thee. In Thee is all daylight and no night. The Scriptures are flooded with light and glory. There is no night there either. Where Thou comest is sunup, aye, and noon. I bless Thee for this morning. It is harbinger of Thee and the day. The day is mine and the day is Thine. We two own it. What a sweet partnership for me! And together we shall own the eternal day. I am a beginner in the use of days and Thou a Master in the use of days. Nothing will seem

strange or bewildering to Thee, nor will anything come up which will unnerve Thee; wherefore with Thee I shall find the day safe, steady-nerved, salubrious to the soul and healthful to my eternal career. I am on a day's work shift. What the day shall disclose I cannot reasonably expect to surmise. By all human wisdom I cannot penetrate into a minute of the shining hours. A minute may snuff out my candle. It has done so with very many. We cannot proceed with swaggering step since the way is all untrod. As a pioneer must I travel the road called to-day. I must walk humbly, though I must walk swiftly. I may not loiter. Thou hast Thy high matters, and if I shall walk with Thee, I must walk with a swinging pace. We shall, mayhap, go far together, Thou, my Lord, and I, ere sun shall set and night voices begin their song.

But such a happy day and such a fruitful day and such a fearless day with Thee! Sun or shadow, rain or drought, plowing or sowing, reaping or gathering into barns, studying or May-daying, taking leisure or fatigued with mighty weariness, what matters since the day is Thine and mine and leads a day's work and a day's walk nearer to the eternal day?

I feel like the eagles with their wings just taught to fly. The enchantment of the world is on my soul. I want to try my wings. A new sky and new wings and I an eagle of the heavens. Thou art He of whom the Good Book says, He stirreth up the eagles' nest, whereby I know Thou carest that we fly and that the day, of whatever sort it is, shall be used. There are no baffling days, if men walk neighborly with God.

The morning entices me. The untouched hours sing out to my heart. I feel the waft of a hidden wind blowing me gently, howbeit surely, onward, and it is a hill wind. I know by its touch upon

my cheek. It is Thy wind. It bloweth where it listeth, but it blows along the road I take. I bless Thee for Thy morning, for its sunlight, for its cloud. This day is bright at its eastern rim, what matters whether it be dark at its western rim? I have Thee. It's a good morning to me in any wise whether I live or die. This day I shall be elate that I had my chance with the day and set foot on its road. Blessed be my God, my Way to every day and through every day. He is at each end of the day bidding me good morning and bidding me good night. Praises and adorations and songs all through the meanderings of this daylight. All's well with my soul and that my heart knoweth right well.

I walk with God in Christ. Amen.

WHILE THE DAY HASTES, MAY WE HASTE

WHEN the winter days are brief, we pray God for expedition in our hearts that we do not let the day drift from us like hurrying smoke and leave nothing but scattered soot behind.

We have no days to waste. The year hurries past, be the days long or short, and we must do a whole day's work however brief the time between the morning light and evening dusk.

Wherefore Thou Who didst redeem the time as no earth-body ever did, come to our help in our shortest days and speed our endeavor. Make for us with Thy high help lest we let a day slip from the calendar and we may not recover it through all the years.

While the day hastes may we haste, running but not slipping, catching some other about to fall and bringing a smiling help to some who have far to go and are slow of foot and heart. Help

me to redeem the time so that a briefest day may be longer than a sweaty day of summer, I pray in Christ. Amen.

GOD IS OUR NOONTIDE REST

BLESSED FATHER, Thou art so close, so tender, so resourceful in Thy loving ministrations—Thou art our noontide rest, our noontime quiet, our noontime calm, our noontide thoughtfulness. Our breathing spell is God. How good beyond all words to utter, for our hearts to feel! Our Good Father which art in heaven, at noon will I love Thee out loud in my prayer. These grateful words shall not interrupt my quiet, but only put a poem on the bank whereon I lie resting, and mayhap Thou shalt come when I am gone to work again and pluck this prayer as if it were a violet fresh with dew. Lord, Thou knowest. Amen.

IF THOU GIVEST NOT THE RAIN?

FATHER of good, it is raining, and it is July, and the corn is thirsty, and the crops are in jeopardy, and now the rain is falling, gently, steadily, singingly, and the cornfields are exultant. Thou givest waters to the flocks and birds and herds and pastures and corn fields and the fields of hay and to man. Thou puttest the cup to their lips. If Thou givest not the rain, they shall all die. Thou art a well of water, our living springs, our passing cloud of raindrop and of shadow. We are dead if Thou forgetest us; we live if Thou hast us in Thy heart.

And Thou art not tired of growing flowers and babes and mothers. They drink from cloud and spring and dripping wells. Thou designest water

for our thirst and art never weary of the task nor us. Blessed be Thy name forever and evermore. Amen.

A PRAYER AT MIDNIGHT

MY GOD, whom, waking or sleeping, I adore, I turn my heart to Thee at this midnight hour. I hear the cock crow, signaling night is half come to day once more. I hear the watchdog bark a long way off. I hear the frog call happy-hearted through the dark; and then I hear the silence. Thou art the Silence so calming to the soul. Voices, I weary of them. They get on my nerves. I love them but am tired by them. It is silence my soul needs, silence in the dark. Night has its high ministrations to the hidden life of man. At midnight the day that was, is far away; the day that is to be is equally far away. I am enswathed in darkness. The universe seems so remote. The lonely midnight voices seem rather echoes than veritable voices. I seem an emperor of a land of dreams. All remote, save God. None near save God. The midnight is my island which I inhabit all alone. Although I hear the sweet breathing of wife and child, they seem not near. I am islanded in quiet, girded with calm, shut in a halcyon with God. How near Thou art when midnight hushes care. How near Thou art when the stars are my nearest neighbors. How near Thou art and how dear! I am nowhere shut out from Thee, allwhere shut in with Thee. No darkness seems gloom with Thee. Thou invadest my silence. Not a voice but a Calm. Not a sound, but a Presence. Not a somebody on the way, but The Somebody arrived and resting, and I at rest with Him. Great Silence meet my little silence with that voiceless hortation of Thine, "My son, my

son," and my silence smiles back, "My Father," in Christ. Amen.

O KING OF DAYS

O KING OF DAYS, I bring to Thee my day. I cannot use it well in my own strength. It is my great day. It may be my last. I am on death's firing line. Any breath may be my last. Any arrow from his bow may spill my blood on the ground. And because of this nearness of the grave to every breath I draw I need a wisdom not my own. I need a grace, a cleansing, a strength. I cannot absolve myself. I need the extreme unction of God, not for death but for life. I need and pray for God's pardon, God's approval, God's cleansing. I need all Thou hast and I have not and need it every moment. Wife, child, friend, neighbors, desire to be my helper but could not. The tug comes at a time when we know not of. The physician I need must perpetually be at hand. Who can so be but God? He is a very present help. Any other would profit me nothing. I cannot wait for a remedy when death slows over my heart. I cannot wait for moral might when the moment comes in passage and I am overthrown and shamed in the cavalry rush of temptation. The wings of the eagle's that would dismay me, shame me, defeat me, are very swift. I need not one to come to my help but one present, not only omnipresent but everpresent. Be my bodyguard, O Lord, this whole day. Make it a holy day. Whether I work or play, whether I pray or read, whether I study or muse, whether I think on Thy kingdom's extension or plan for my family, may I have the persistent sense of the nearness of God and the cleansing of God and the forefending of God and the defending of God, so that in life

or, if it hap, in death, I may be in Thy presence where is fullness of joy for evermore. Amen.

THE TIME CARD OF THE WORLD IS IN GOD'S HANDS

LORD, I am restless as one who waits for a delayed train on a winter night. I walk to and fro and look at the watch and go out on the platform and listen. My spirit and muscles ache and chide each other. I am incoherent and garrulous in complaint. Yet by it all, the delayed train is not hastened in arrival only I am myself grown neurotic.

Lord, put me in better fettle, calm my muscles, my nerves, my breast. My times are in Thy hands. The time card of the world and of the worlds is in Thy hands. The delayed trains of Thy goodness bring great freightage of heart's ease, help, comfort, rest in God.

Help me that I grow not restless as caged birds, but rather with scant room for flight, make up for lack of sky-room by much singing. Give to me my song in confined spaces where only restlessness abides, that I may have composure of mind and swift self-control, seeing that all is well for me, having God for my portion forever. Amen.

A NEW YEAR BEGINS TO-DAY

MY Lord and my God, here I am again soliciting Thy favor. It is a new year begins to-day. I have not done commendably in the old, dead year. I could weep over the miscarriages of purpose in those days which are no more if that would avail. But tears cannot cleanse a past. Only Thy blood can avail for such supreme business. I know that I will not fret about my past

but commend it, with broken heart, to Thee, Lord of pasts and presents and futures. I will not walk weepingly toward my glad new year: I will walk eagerly with a new lamp of holy purpose lighted in my hand.

I purpose to love Thy will and know Thy will and do Thy will. It is a brave design, and how can I carry it into execution? I cannot in myself. I can by Thyself and myself. Give me that needed and securable partnership which has not failed such as have entered into it with wide intent to make life radiant and secure.

All this year I solicit Thy kind presence and Thy prevailing presence. A light by day and a cloud by night, such wast Thou once, and not less wilt Thou be that to my exodus and my anabasis to my Holy Land.

I care not how long the way nor winding, how hot the desert path nor how burning the thirst; for I know well that when I am all but spent with thirst, a well of water shall gush out from some burning wayside rock, and leaning down to slake my thirst the water shall be cool and refreshing as freshly squeezed from snow drifts in the upper hills.

Even so, preserve and bless me, that my new year stumble not nor falter, but rejoice and make great ascent. Amen.

THE SOB IN THE NIGHT

THE sob in the night, I have known that, as Thou knowest right well, my Father. Thou stayest near. A sob from a child will waken its father in the dark. How much more will my heavenly Father who never sleeps hear my sob? I have had grounds for sobbing. My sins have been my nightmare. Our loved ones have gone

from our sweet home to make homes of their own, and left our home desolate, wherefore in the night when I should have slept I have wakened and wept. I was so lonesome for them. My heart wanted them so, and ere I knew it my sob was in the night.

And then, Thou wast near. Blessed Presence! My tears are wiped away of God. He knew when my heart had its barb. He knew I had lost friends loved long whiles and now missed for awhile. He knew I was motherless and that my father lies on a windy prairie hill. He knows how many such as had befriended me through earlier and later years, who had been like a father and mother to me, had died with my name on their lips as memento of their love; and I was yearning for them: my sob in the night which by day I had controlled, and in the night, when I half slumbered, it slipped from my throat and wakened me. My Father, Thou wast beside me then in tenderness and unrebuke and didst quiet me, saying: "Thou shalt see them hereafter. I will guide thee. Sleep, sob no more." And I wakened not till dawn. Amen.

WHEN THE DAY'S WORK IS HALF DONE

AT noon will I pray, in the middle of the day when day looks back toward morning and forward toward night, when the day's work is half done, when I am in its midst, when the shadows have not been bidden to the edges of the woods and the birds have not begun to hush them for their nests, when I may mend my speed if I were lagging in the forenoon and make the afternoon better than the forenoon was, when I may make up in song for the song the morning lacked, when I can cast eyes half backward, half

forward, and so qualify myself to redeem the time; I will not slow down my work to pray: I will speed up my work to pray. I want to make out a full day, so that when night bids me go home and rest I may be honorably tired. I want to be a man the rest of the day. Get me busy, my Lord. Sing some song in my soul, I pray. May I be eager to have my work acceptable and not so much watch the clock or the sun as the task nearing completion. Keep me diligent, happily industrious. and bring me hungry and happy home at night, I pray in Christ. Amen.

DAILY WHEELS WEAR RUTS IN THE SOUL

LORD, on this another Lord's Day morning, I would reverently call upon the name of the Lord. To the Proprietor and Inventor of this holy, salutary day I come when the day is fresh as the new-blown flowers. It is meet and right and my bounden duty, truly, but is my bounden delight also. I am drawn to Thee by my soul. The fretful weeks wear on me. While I love the day's work, notwithstanding it tires me. The daily wheels wear ruts in my soul. My hands hang limp as wet sails. I am in the mesh of sweaty days. The pathway of my life tends to become a road with deep ruts worn in it, and sound of auto honks.

Sunday gives a little time for the grass to grow over the ruts, so that once again I can walk on country roads which spring a little to my feet. The pavement of the week has no springiness. The macadam road is hard as a granite hill and takes all the jolts of the day's work, and this in time makes the body nervous till it shakes like a little boat on tossing water.

Then the Lord's Day comes, and green and growing grass along the way, and I walk once more with springing feet, and the cool from the woodland breathes out, and a wild bird flutters across my path, and I think I hear a hermit thrush sing where I am alone with God. Blessed day, and blessed be God for this blessed day. It was so good in Him to think it out and plan it out for me and for all others of my race. Because Sundays are customary I pray the Lord of the day to keep me from becoming blind, unconscious of the sublime intent and the divine beauty and glory. I want to keep the blessedness of this refreshing day, this day of recovery, ever at dew-drip in my soul. Help me, my Christ, Lord of the Sabbath. Amen.

PRAYERS OF NATURE AND MAN

A YOUNG MAN'S PRAYER

LORD, if Thou be Lord, as I am told Thou art, I seem not to feel my need of Thee. My blood runs hot, riotous, tidal. I feel neither lack nor fear. The sense of God trammels me, I want no interference, I ask no help. I am like the wild winds in winter, I am full of bluster, braggadocio, bravado, anarchy. What need I of God? What care I or think I of death? What need I of immortality? Time is enough for me.

Yet as I talk this, the swagger of it sickens me. So I do, but I feel when I am candid that it is not sane doing. So I feel and speak, but neither my deed nor my speech is satisfactory. I remember my father and mother. They have nurtured me in love. I have not nurtured myself, not clothed myself, fed myself, nor given myself holiday. I played because my father worked. I went to school because my father and my mother stayed out of school. I have not bravely considered that my independence was dependence. Somebody helped me every step I took. I have been a witless pensioner of paternal and maternal solicitude and providence and am a poor person to swagger and talk loudly on the street. I had been a beggar but for them, and the unobtrusive affection of these two dear, dear folks—the mother who gave me birth and cradle on her heart, the father whose business did but earn money for my sustenance. Lord, forgive me for talking like a fool and swaggering like a drunkard. I dislike the sound and

sight of it. Heal my flamboyant boastings, for I am shamed by them. And if my father and mother have been my hourly providence, how much more hast Thou been my Providence daily, since first I saw the light and before it! All the things which I have needed—home, friends, country, clear sky, rainy weather, rush of wind, blooming flowers, schoolmates, resilence of life, abundance of hope, trusting the future, rejoicing in strength, all these from Thee, *from Thee.*

Lord, forgive my poor, prating atheism and bid my pratings be silent while I kneel and make my prayer to Thee, O God of my life. Hear a young man's prayer for refuge from himself in Christ. Amen.

THE RACE AND I

LORD, if ever I have been remiss in service to my fellow men, grant me forgiveness. I would not have had it so. Yet it would be forgetfulness in me to think I had never been thus remiss. I have great need of my brother men; and feel they have need of me, although I bless my God that I possess the consciousness that I have my ministry to men and have been aware of it day and night through hurrying years.

I am one with the race. I suffer with the race, and rejoice with the race, and pray for and with the race. I am caught in the meshes of a thing mightier than myself. I feel the glory of race relationship so that whatever affects me affects them and whatever affects them affects me. I cannot patronize my fellows nor they me. I drink their cup; they mine. We are marching together to one war and hoeing together in one field. This is a brother-business, this life I live and love to live. Have I forgotten how brotherhood works and that it does work worthily for brothers?

When I have and if I have, I crave Thy forgiveness. I would crave their forgiveness if I could catch their ear, but Thou art their God and my God and I come to Thee for forgiveness for ever having slighted those whom Thou hast ordained and for whom Jesus died. If I have been peevish in temper with men, if I have been over critical, if unforgiving for the human weakness and want of high resolve, if I have forgotten in looking at their failings to note my own, pardon me, I implore, My Master. I cannot throw stones lest they ricochet and smite me to my own wounding. I am sworn brother to human weakness and selfishness, wherefore I am driven to Thee, where only grows the strength for virtue, fortitude, cleanness of heart. Make me to be brave to defend the weak, and to amend the fallen, and may I bring to men in myself the presence of the living God, so that by me they may encounter Thee, I pray in Christ. Amen.

THE SWALLOWS PARABLE

LORD, I see the swallows wheeling near the chimney of our little house where comfort and quiet sit and hold each other's hands. Sometimes the swallows fling on mystic wing up and out and off as if beginning a day's escapade in the skies of July, but in a minute or two they are back again—and just a little nearer the chimney rest-place for the night; and so each swift spurt of wing brings them nearer till one by one the swallows dip into the little dormitory, where in winter the wood smoke rises blue and beautiful; and in a little while not one twittering swallow is in the sky—all are at home in the chimney shadow and heads tucked snugly under the shadowy wing of slumber. All at home, at home.

I thank Thee, my God, for this evening parable.

It is very sweet. For so my earth flight draws nearer my rest place till at last I will fly into rest in the home-heart of my God. Amen.

I AM FLYING TOWARD GOD'S HOUSE

LORD, I mark how sometimes the birds get lost in the storm; and it troubles me. Instinct does not always guide them safely.

I am fairly affrighted. I am on the way. I make long voyage in the sky. I have no chart nor compass.

And I must not get lost. What shall hinder me? And in my dilemma, my heart cries out pantingly, "God will hinder me." I am flying toward His house. I must make my long rest on His heart. The storm is implacable and very oppressive. Though I circle about high up as carrier pigeons do, I may not get the track across the starry sky. I shiver at the prospect but hush my fear, remembering Thou wilt be there alongside and take flight with me, O Blessed and only Potentate! When wild birds lose their way, I shall make calm flight across the skies; for with me, flying strong, will be the Strong Son of God.

And in the shadow of his wings I shall rejoice, make headway, and arrive, in Christ. Amen.

TOWARD GOD'S LIGHT

LORD, we pray for the ruddy feet that bear us toward God's light. Amen.

NOT A BILLOW OF A WINDY SEA

LORD, my God, I thank Thee I am not a billow of a windy sea driven by the winds and tossed. I am a ship to brave the waters and ad-

venture on the sea and bear in my hold brave merchandise. In spite of winds and waves I sail. My topsail catches winds the waves know nothing of and winds along the ocean's floor are oblivious to.

Thou art the higher wind that catches my sail and drives my craft against wind and wave.

I lovingly bless Thee for this gracious and great service rendered. I am Thy merchantship ladened with Thy wares and bound for Thy wharves. Ship and passenger and merchandise are Thine; and Thou art my Sailor; Thou trimmest my sail; Thou chartest my ocean; and if I come so far, it is Thyself must bring me to my desired haven.

I am so wrapped up in Thee that I cannot untwist the cable of my life and not find Thee in every strand of it. Thou art Thou and I am I. Thou hast much substance of Thine in my soul. When my betterness lifts voice the angels think Thy voice is calling when it is only mine. Thank God. Amen.

THE MORNING STAR

LORD, I woke this morning while the morning star was still lit. I bless Thee at the sight of it. It has its gospel to my heart; it has its solace to my soul. It has its prophecy full of all encouragement. The morning star! Under its tender light I make my prayer. The robin redbreast is asleep to now. No flute of his makes minstrelsy. Thou hast a moment of silence in the which my voice may have its time for song. Thou wilt hear my voice at earliest morning. All earth voices beside are hushed. The babes are not awakened yet. Wilt Thou mistake my prayer for a wild bird's song? Or wilt Thou think it is a sick child's cry? Or wilt Thou think it is a sobbing upon an instrument breaking in the dark? Or wilt

Thou think it is one of the many redeemed of Jesus Christ Thy Son lilting to Thee? It matters not. All voices that bubble up are friends of Thee. The broken string and broken wing have their superior appeal to the Infinite Heart. All voices that wing toward Thee are sure of Thee. It is so sweet to know this. We do not waken God by our tears or cares or songs. He is wide awake —and listening. The morning star watches from the sky and I watch from my window. It and I are stars alike to Thee. It and I have our song. And mayhap Thou shalt say, "This morning has two morning stars, and both are singing." I shine to Thee. This morning star shines to Thee, and some morning it will not arise and shine; it will be burned out, while I shall shine on in everlasting luster. Thou carest for me and my light above Thy care for the morning star. O Blessed Father, I am allowed by thy plan and mercy an undated future. How old art thou, bright morning star? What, so old? Knowest Thou I shall be older than thee, some morning? Thou shalt blow out but I shall grow on past all thy length of years and grow toward youth, not age—not age, toward youth eternal by the grace of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.

MY TWO HANDS—AND GOD'S HAND

LORD, be with me. Thou hast so many in Thy family; so many little folks and big, so many sick folks and nigh to die, and shall I enter on this Thy busy day? I must. I need Thee. And when I know that my approach is Thy delight, then my heart rejoices like a river flowing into the sea.

Thou art with me despite Thy many cares. Thou art with me. Thy hand of potent and

paternal love is shutting down on my work hands. Two hands at my work. Then, one more hand Thine, thanks be to God. Amen.

TRIVIAL THINGS ARE NOT TRIVIAL TO GOD

WE bless God that He has need for little things. He seems so remote from need of any help that we can render. He has angels to bring Him aid and to do His work. He has a heaven full of helpers. We seem to be of less help to God than the hill to the water lily. Yet, thank God, it is not so. Trivial things are not trivial to God.

Each star has its glimmer of light, each flower has its gift of blossom. Each rivulet has its own quaint wandering and its own issue to the river. We are not less consequential than these other belongings of Thine. Thou hast not given star and flower and stream a ministry and left us without ministry. Our little finds its value toward Thee. We who are Thy folks, we love Thee for this dignity whereby Thou hast appareled our little lives. We wear a garment of sunlight, even as the strong mountains do. Thou hast not left us out of a catalogue of forces in the world. Thou hast enumerated us among Thy energies sublime. This braces us like sea air. This makes us radiant like a June morning. Our little help is welcome to the great, beautiful God. Our little bloom is precious in His sight. Our wild rose flower is dear to Him, though we bloom apart unheeded of all save the Great Gardener, God. Our little gift is God's belonging, our little voice of prayer for the suffering, our salt tears falling for the fallen, our smile for the desolate, our handshake with the downcast, our little effort to in-

crease our mental and moral stature, our plaintive striving after better things than those we have attained unto—all these in Thy kind providence have value to earth and to Thee. Hallelujah! Amen.

A PRAYER FOR WEALTH TO MAKE

LORD, we thank Thee for the measure of prosperity Thou hast given us in our worldly affairs. We cannot arrogate to ourselves the credit of this success. Thou art its source. Thou hast favored our undertaking. We have been gifted of God with robust strength, a steady hand, a working brain, a nervous system which has not been easily wrecked or untuned.

As we kneel in prayer we know the arrogating of success cannot be logical to our career. We have been dealt with very favorably. Thou hast put prosperity next door to our hearts. Health has been ours and sleep of night and the refreshed awakening. We have been born amidst conditions which stimulate energy. We would not be moral delinquents in that we should affect to be our own fortune's architect. We give Thee thanks for prosperity, for prosperity come, though tardily. That we were born poor but have achieved competency makes us glad. We are not sorry to have been poor; we are grateful to be rich, howbeit, help us to use our plenty as honest men use their Lord's money. Keep us from hoarding it. Keep us from setting too much store by common gold. Give us the common sense to set low values on money for its own sake, but high values on money for the world's sake, for our loved ones' sake, for the gospel's sake, for the heathen's sake, for the Christ's sake. Keep us continually grateful for the hand that Thou hast taken in our success and

shame us from the infidelity which in the possession of plenty forgets God to lean upon the brittle staff of worldly prosperity. We will, by Thy good help, hallow Thy name by our stewardship of the wealth Thou hast helped us to acquire in Christ. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF A SOLITARY

LORD, I am solitary; I live apart; I have no neighbor; I am like a dweller in the remotest desert. I feel my solitude. Who passes my way? Who knows that I am here? Who turns face toward my little house to pray for me? No one keeps a pressed rose in the hidden book—a rose of remembrance for me? I am like some sunken island that once was on the sea's surface and where ships might cast anchor, but now, uncharted, swallowed up in the great sea. Once, men came my way. Once, my door was thronged. Once, the pathway to my house was tramped like a chariot wheel's rut. That was ages ago, it seems to my heart. So my lips mutter, and in my solitude Thou art by me, Thou holdest discourse with me, and my heart rejoices and my glory awakes in God my Saviour. Amen.

A PRAYER BESIDE A GREAT WATER

THANKS be to God of the Sonorous Flood. The sea is His. The wide water answers to the touch of His power. Their momentous music is not rebellion against him. They answer to His will. He speaks and they wake and arise in torrents of fury. He speaks and their clamor hastens to a calm like a little child's breathing. The waves do his bidding. All through the night the waves call, "Deep calleth unto deep." These

choirs sing in the night. How sweet it is to lie down, sung to sleep by the lullabies of those waves which themselves never fall utterly asleep, but only doze listening for the command of their Lord. These symphonies of the sea, what a long-breathed rapture it is! When brain and nerve and muscle and the very fiber of the flesh and spirit are tired to the brink of death, how the sea washes every stain of weariness and care away, till we are like a shore new washed with the storm! If all Thy billows have gone over me, yet did they not drown me but only washed me until I was cleansed by the storm and laundered by the sea. How I love Thy waters, O Lord! What a brave day of Thine it was when Thou didst consider to make the sea, whose assembled fleets are like a passing cloud when mirrored on the surface of this wide expanse! How the winds raving, calm here! How the sunlight laughs upon the wide breast of ten thousand billows! How the waters lap on the shores or tangle along the bases of sea crags! How full of organ melody the dream of the storm! And when the stormy minstrelsy grows majestic, it is like we dream the voice of God to be. The great, brave unmastered sea hath Thee for Master. Thou wilt take the masts of broken ships, broken on the snarls of the sea, and kindle a fire with them where children shall laugh out loud at the blaze and their parents sing a song, not witting that they sing. Our petty cares are drowned in these regurgent melodies and our Majesty stands forth to meet the God of the sea. Not Neptune of old days with his sea-wet lips and his Triton myrmidons, but the calm and smiling Christ walking on stormy waves at night, and his garments not wet, only his feet sandaled by the sea, and his voice like the drift of the wind of spring saying, "It is I, be not afraid." Lord, our God, we bless Thee for Thy sea, in Christ. Amen.

WALKING IN GOD'S APPLE ORCHARD WITH HIM

MY LORD AND SAVIOUR, I look across the fields and see the apple trees in bloom, and my heart thrills to know that Thou art out there inhaling the fragrance, smiling on their white blossoms touched with wild-rose pink. What a lover of beauty Thou art! The bloom of the apple tree is a poem, and the apple is a part of daily bread, and Thou producest both. Thou givest beauty for ashes only not, as some suppose, at far removed intervals. It is a habit of Thine. From the ash-heap of the soil smile out the apple blossoms with loveliness and fragrance. The ash pit of the ground is odorless; the apple drift of bloom is sweet-scented as the gardens back of Thy throne in heaven. Not from the air, not from the earth, comes the perfume. It comes from Thee. Thou art our great Grower, and when we dully think that Thou art out growing apples, lo, Thou art out picking flowers for a bouquet for a sick woman's weary pillow. All orchard trees and shrubs I have noted are beautiful of blossom. The blackberry and raspberry are an arch of white like flowers rooted in a shining stream; the strawberry has a blossom as white, surprising, and lovely as a jasmine flower; pear blossoms are a bewilderment of white till after awhile the flowers appear like a scud of ocean foam on a snowy wave blown white by the sea, and cherry blossoms are white as seashell, and crabapple blossoms wear tints like a woman's cheek.

Thou wilt feed us, truly, but wilt decorate our table meanwhile with nosegays of Thy growing and of Thy gathering. O my Lord, whose thought has in it all loveliness, I thank Thee for this spring morning sight of Thy apple trees in bloom. The beauty of the Lord our God is upon me. I

shall walk in His apple orchard with Him what time He fingers the petals of that lovely flower and will love Thee and laud Thee and rejoice in God my Saviour. Amen.

FATIGUE IS BUT FOR A NIGHT

LORD, I will not fret though the day be cold and the landscape barren and the winds wild. I am not their child. I am Thy child. I belong not to the elements, but to God. I shiver along the ways, but not as one who mopes and moans, but as one to whom all weathers are subsidiary and for whom all things whatsoever hold salutations and service.

I am so grateful for this ruddy sense of life which no fatigue can weary, nor any humdrum make despondent. I am safe and well and strong and radiant in Thee.

If my flesh fail, my heart shall not fail; and my heart is myself. My flesh—well, it shall see God. So much for that tiring apparel of my soul. Fatigue is but for a night, and the rest cometh at the morning.

I am of the morning and for the morning, and all's well. However things go, all's well. I climb to Thee.

I wing to Thee. Mine expectation is in the God of rejoicing and my strength.

Thanks be to God all days, all wheres. Amen.

A PRAYER BESIDE WIDE WATERS

LORD, I thank Thee that I am beside one of Thy wide waters. There is blue water stretching out to blue sky. Thy clear distance is before me and above me. The boundless is in my

front door yard, the clear space where not even the dust of stars gathers on Thy receding waves. I bless Thee for this splendid world, this world of sky and waters. We wash our garments because the world is full of filth and dirt; and soap and suds are necessities; we lean over the washboard till our backs ache. The washing must be done. However, not always. There is a washday here, but in heaven no washday, because their ways are dustless. There is a fount of cleansing here and there is a cleansed world there. God's angels are clad in white. God's saints are arrayed in spotless apparel as no fullers can whiten them. The cleansed folk wear cleansed apparel. No soiled hands, no muddy feet, no dirty garments in the soilless land whither we are to come.

And beside Thy summer sea all this becomes beautifully apparent to my heart. My spirit shines out into praise. The clear sky, the clear sea beckon and proclaim. 'Tis in a place like this I perceive that God was white, snow-white in character. Thou art clean, and the emphasis on cleanness beyond any possibility of soiling. The Lord of the sea and the sky is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. For this we praise Thee in Christ. Amen.

WE ARE CREATURES OF EVERY DAY

AT noon, kind heavenly Father, it is good for my heart to have converse with Thee. Thou givest rest by the river, but Thou also dost give rest at the noon. Not every landscape has rivers, but every day has its noon; and life has its everyday. There is no slip of a day in Thy calendar. We are not creatures of every other day but creatures of every day. "Give us this day our daily bread," the Christ taught us that. We shall have

day by day and every day. And each tired day will have its noon. Thank God. We are too weary to wait for the night with its longed-for rest. Thou knowest, Thou knowest. He who sat at noonday on the Sychar well for sheer fatigue and thirst, He remembers. He knows how hot the way is for the naked feet, and how even a seat in the burning sun is restful. We cannot wait till night to rest. So, at noon, half way across the moor we call the day, half way across the desert we call the day, half way across the plowed field we call the day, half way through the house-cleaning we call the day, half way through the puddling furnace we call the day, half way through the merchandise we call the day, half way across —and then, a seat by the road and a cool hand laid on our two hot pulses, and a great rest like a cool wind breathing up a long valley and, lo, the cooling hand is God's hand! Amen.

THOU ART MY GARDEN

LORD, I feel myself planted in Thee. I bless Thee for that planting. Thou hast planted me there. Thou art my garden. That soil is rich ground. The ages have seen what things grow there in luxuriousness and loveliness—lilies and palms and wheat for bread and rare spices and tall cedars whose breath is balm and whose strength made light of storms. Women in that soil have grown loveliness like a Madonna's, and men there have grown great cliffs of comfort and defense. There is no winter to such as be planted in Thee, but all seasons conspire for growth, shadow, song, and peace.

Wherefore, my Lord, seeing such things are sure things, I would root me in Thee. I need to be what I am not and to do what I cannot do.

Only in Thee all high things of soul become possible. I feel Thy sap along my trunk and branches. Thy growth grows lusty in my soul. Be my Garden, yea and my Gardener, and I shall rest content, in Christ. Amen.

WHEN THE LIGHTNINGS FLARE

LORD, one of Thy little maids with a sweet wisdom learned of Thee—for where else could she have learned learning so deep?—said, "I think prayer is just talking to God." With the little maid's definition of prayer may I pray to Thee to-day. This day I want to talk to Thee. It is so restful to talk with God. He is so quiet, so passionately calm, so undelirious in the midst of things delirious, and in talking to Him there is calm, not for the asking but from the swift contagion of His rest. As little children, when the lightnings flare, watch their mother and if she is unfrightened go on with their play unfretted, so shall my talk with Thee establish my peace. To talk with Thee will keep me pure. I cannot be sinful in communion with God. As a boy cannot talk to his mother polluted talk nor polluted thought, so can I not talk in other terms than cleanheartedness to Thee. That my converse is with God will make all the roadways of my heart clean as the light. My heart becomes unpurposefully pure by holding converse with Thee. Clean Heart, when I talk with Thee I grow strong. Thy strength is catching. Thy brave and steady voice what time the danger fares along the way will teach my fingers cunning and my right hand sword-skill. The brave outlook will come to me as a matter of course. I shall run toward my pursuer clad in the armor

of God. I shall stand equipped, in nothing lacking for the adventure of the day whether it be death or life. While I talk with Thee I shall be caught in the strong strength of love. Thy love shall make me lovely, lovable, love-abiding. I shall be as one who is touched with the burning finger of the lightning, every atom infected with might and moment. Love shall occupy my soul as a fortress. I shall look and see the landscape with eyes of love and the population with heart of love, and shall unknowingly become a world lover and take my lesser stand alongside the World Lover whose name is Jesus Christ, to whom be praise everlasting. Amen.

I FIND THEE THERE

I THANK Thee, my God, that wherever I go, on whatsoever quest, I find Thee there. If I go among the trees by the winding waters and where the sunsets burn, or where, across the meadows, the cattle feed or lie quiet, there art Thou. Thou lovest such things and art their Creator. If I go among the crowds on city ways where the multitudes jostle and complain, where trade is impetuous and sweaty, there art Thou, Lover of great crowds, Mingler with them and Creator of them. If I go where people are poor like myself, where pleasures are simple and where a little goes a long way, I find Thee there smiling. Wert not Thou in Thy earth days poorer than we, and son and brother of humble folk? If I go where learning is prevalent, where all knowledge walks with quiet steps, I find Thee there, Master of all knowledge and Maker of all learning. If I go among the farmers of the field, where crops are on the way to harvest and where sowing is and

where harvest will be, there art Thou, Best Sower that ever went forth to sow. If I go where happiness keeps house and joy sings at its task or where people are out for a holiday carefree as birds singing in green trees, there I meet Thee, smiling and singing and making holiday with those that make holiday. If I go to the anvil that rings and sweats at its work, there art Thou, swinging hammer and making sparkles in the forge. If I go to the house of prayer where men and women feel their need of God and bow at Thy altars in contrition for their sins and wash their hands with unavailing tears and come to find repentance and forgiveness, to be sure Thou art there, Lover of the house of prayer and Propitiation of the sins of the whole world. Blessed be God who is everywhere I ever need to go and will be forever, in Christ. Amen.

EMBOWERED

LORD, I bless Thee for how lovely a homely hut may be when it is embowered in vines and roses and sweet-scented things. I just now saw a pigsty overrun by wild grape and it was so fair to see. I note a peevish little shack drift past my flying window, with a blooming honeysuckle clustered about it and a cherokee wild rose flinging its unnumbered blossoms about with lavish beauty; and the hut was fitted to be an angel's house. On the "gallery," as the Southern phrasing runs, sits a mother woman, and some pickanniny folks; and I know full well to Thine eye they were sweeter blossoms than the wild rose clusters and the honeysuckle flower and leaf —the little, peevish house, with the flowers scenting the air and the children to be loved and tended and the mother to love them and tend

them and a father out in the field in his shirt sleeves hoeing the cotton along the woods. Ah, my heavenly Father, and their heavenly Father, how beautiful these simple daily mercies are! Thou plannest so that the cheap things and places of life are made exquisite by the artistry of God. The grapevine and the rose will as readily grow at the little house of the renter as about the castle of the very rich, and children are as lovely to love in tattered garments as in the cloaks of kings. All which is so beautiful, my God, that I am lost in the sweet miracle of it. Thou art everybody's God. Everybody has a Lover now. I am on a scurrying train but have mistaken it for some stately cathedral perfumed with prayer. It was no fancy. Thy door opens into the sparrow's nest and into humble hearts. So I worship Thee and bow down. Thy mercy crowds my heart sky-high. Amen.

CAUGHT IN THE BLIZZARD'S GRIP

LORD, my Lord, I am caught in the blizzard's grip. I can go neither forward nor backward. At the station I wait the night through, and the train turns not a wheel. In the morning in answer to my inquiry is, "All trains annulled, and no information as to when they will resume." I look homeward longingly. The snow whirls and falls from the tall buildings like a mist, a busy mist. I am surfeited with uncertainty. I am lost in lack of knowledge.

Praises be to God, my God, not so in my life. Though my storm is on many a day, I feel so sure in Thee. Thou orderest this tempest. Thou dost direct its far and severe goings. These snows bring assured fertility to the fields and

insure crops to feed the world. I must not judge in my meager knowledge nor be peremptory over my personal comfort. Large things are in God's designs. This tempest is not a catastrophe. It is a parable. This grim storm has unsullen uses, high ministries of fertility and harvest.

I will gratefully leave my life in the hands of The Harvester Who knows and cares and plans and orders all things to the betterment of my soul and all souls.

I therefore in the heart of the tempest bide in tempestless calm and commanding peace. Though my longing for home and my beloveds holds unabated, yet wilt Thou keep them for me. I commit my tempest to Thee—the tempest in Thy time; and Thy time be my time, in Christ. Amen.

CLAMOROUS FOR THE DAYLIGHT

THOU Rose of Sharon, I see Thy marshmallows in full flower and thank Thee for so fair a sight. My train is sprinting toward the southern sea and will not take breath and let me look, so that what I receive is a baffling look at flowers shining above the marshes and all in wide-open bloom. It is worth a half lifetime to see this wonder of blossoming just once. They seem so glad, so enticed by the wonder of bloom. They run to it, so radiant to behold the sun and the summer, so spread abroad to catch all the laughter of the sun they may by any means attain. They are clamorous for the daylight. Their night seemed long, but now their day has come. How profuse they are, crowding triumphant, radiant, some white as still starlight, some pink as the palm of a baby's hand, but grouped gladnesses rejoicing in life and bloom. Some sit apart as in

lovely aloofness, many in communities of bloom, but all smiling out to God. Some bloom near a poor patchwork hut beside a graveyard. They do well to bloom near a neglected graveyard. Somebody must remember the dead, and these are resurrection flowers God has planted by the graves of the forgotten dead. They run to meet our train. They shout out a floral welcome and pass us to give welcome to those who succeed us. They cry in mute triumph, "God hath bidden us bloom, and we are his servants."

Lord, Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley, what can I render unto Thee for the coronation Thy mallow flowers have given this day verging on the southern sea? The day is hot, but I have forgotten the heat; the breeze is listless, but I have forgotten that also; for have not Thy flowers blown on me the breath of heaven, and am I not compassed about with the glory of God and the God of the glory? Thanksgiving and Amen.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND SORROW

A PRAYER TO BE CHIDED FOR SIN

LORD, chide us for our sins. We have need of Thy sharp word whetted like a sword. We dwell too easily. We keep soul house luxuriously; we fall into content with ourselves till we fall asleep in the daytime in indolence of complacency.

Hurl Thy dart at us. Transfix us with Thy spear, to the intent that we spring up alarmed at ourselves. We are full of flaws, of besetting sins, of omission, of commission, of numbness of conscience, of energyless activity. We pay idly, pray idly, live superficially.

Lord, pity our stupidity of soul. Lacerate us if need be. Stir us to alarm with ourselves, lest the days pass and we make no wholesome growth, lest spring be gone and we put forth no blossom, or summer come and our spring blossom proceed not to fruit or the fall be here and our summer fruit fail to ripen. Great God, may we be duly appalled at that dreary prospect and bestir ourselves by Thy help till we rise to be sons and daughters of God in deed and in truth. Amen.

LORD, I AM CONFRONTED BY CALVARY

LORD, I am confronted by Calvary. Every turn of my life's road flings Calvary high in the foreground of the landscape, God suffering for me that I might prevail in life, struggle and not fail,

fight and conquer, walk and make headway, work and see harvests spring where my sowing went. Great Calvary, High Calvary, God on the hilltop dying for my redemption. I need that lesson daily, and so it is that that high, strange mountain fronts my every going. God hates sin and loves sinlessness and against sin died, and for righteousness lives. I want to learn that lesson, "By the grace of God tasted death for every man." I am died for by God. Great investments are made in me to the end that I should not fail of being a man of God.

O Christ of Calvary, mend my ways for me, cleanse my heart for me, plan my way for me, build my mansion anear Thy house on high and make me to fellowship with the suffering God and with the saving God, by suffering, by tears, by prayers, by consecration, by elation in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, I pray in Christ. Amen.

EFFICACY IN SHAME

LORD, Thou seest the garden of my heart how it is rained on by my penitential grief. Such tears undeniably soften the baked soil a little. I cannot garden without rain nor without this rain of mine own penitential tears.

There is some efficacy in grief of shame. I know how hard my heart soil is, and infertile until the heavenly dews or heavenly rains fall on it softly. I am grieved with myself. I bewail my shortcomings and my sins. They crowd upon me early and late. I see the harvest hour but scent no harvest.

Let Thy rains fall on my drought heart. My penitential tears do not suffice. I need Thy tears and blood to soften my hard heart that it may become a fruitful garden of the Lord.

Thou who didst weep over Jerusalem, Thou didst die for me. Thou canst produce a softening of my heart as nothing else can. I feel my whole being tender when I survey Thy cross. I feel the tender shoots of holy growth. Thou waterest my spirit. The continuous presence of Thy tendering sacrifice is altogether necessary. I pray, therefore, for Thy rain upon my spirit daily, hourly till I die. Amen.

THOU CANST DO ONE POOR MAN GOOD

LORD, if Thou canst take a little time in my behalf, Thou canst do one poor man good. I need Thee. I need Thee every hour. This is not a plaint. This is a praise. I need Thee. My littleness needs Thee and my largeness needs Thee. I cannot tell which needs Thee most. When I am outraged at myself, how low I have fallen! and how lean my soul! Then my last resort is to the Lord my Maker and my Redeemer; and when my largeness tries its wings to soar into the sky, when the everlastings tug at my spirit, when the majesty of me girds its loin for some high endeavor, then I need Thee. Thou who hast put such unfeverish desire tugging vast tide-tugs at my spirit, canst direct me and my wide wonder so that I shall encounter Thee wherever I walk or fly. So many have lost Thee in their wingings! Their wings have lost them and they have flown away into far recesses of darkness which neighbors on hell. I need my God when I am most myself and most surely the strength I was born to be. All the time I need Thee. And I have Thee. O blessed be God, my strengthener in weakness and my strengthener in strength! I need Thee *most* all whiles, all wheres, not simply to lead me from temptation, but in that space

where temptations vex the soul no more, where nevermore intrusion invades to push the Lord aside, where no danger lieth, nor any wolf is near, in that good country whereof I ofttimes dream, I shall need God as I never needed Him in any lesser hours. He will still be the strength of life and the sure Pilot of my soul, whose companionship makes eternity worth while, in Christ. Amen.

MY SINS OUTCRY NIAGARA

MY sins cry out so loudly I can scarce hear Niagara thunder. I am a sinner, but not there do I reside. There is Hope some place along this road. I am a sinner. Day after day am I confronted with that dire tragedy of me. My trouble is not making a living, not in sending my lads and girls to school, not in paying house rents and buying garments, not in keeping my little garden clean nor growing flowers in the hid corners of the yard, not in getting on with my neighbors, not in getting work to do nor walking to my work. My trouble is my sin. It makes familiar with me. It peers in at the shut windows of my heart. It shrills louder than winter blasts and calls me by my name as it were my familiar friend. Whoever they be who deny the validity of sin, I know them liars to my soul. Sin doth beset me. I feel the purity of God to be my undoing. He rebukes me when He saith no word. His holiness rebukes my unholiness. Not by talk doth God undo me but by personality.

Peccavi! Peccavi! I could run that gamut in a thousand bitter notes, but to what avail, and then I being a sinner and not able for my own recovery, I find Christ to be a Saviour and that He saves to the uttermost all that come to Him in faith. Hallelujah! I will not rage against my sin. I

will run to Christ. I will not make tumult. I will make haste, to Christ. The Fountain I need is near. I will pitch my tent beside that healing Siloam and where the water for my recovery is ever troubled and needeth no special angel, for the Angel of the Lord is always there—in his left hand white lilies and in His right hand cleansing and life forevermore.

Grace doth much more abound.

Blessed be God the Saviour of the World! Amen.

WE ARE ENGULFED IN THY MERCY

LORD, we praise and pray. If we pray, we end in praise; and if we praise, we end in prayer. The thought of Thee is sweet; we are engulfed in Thy mercy. We are heartened by Thy remembrance of us. We are not motes in the sunbeam but immortals on a majestic landscape. Thou hast told us this. We are not guessers after truth but have been made acquainted with the Truth whose name is Christ. We walk along the road; and evermore we sing.

We bless the eternal God that though the universe is large, He is larger than His universe; and so far from that vast domain smothering us, it gives us atmosphere and space commensurate with our enlargement; and God is great enough to hold in solution in His thought and love all spaces and all peoples and all souls. This great God is our Saviour.

He leadeth me; He holdeth me; He calleth for me; He redeemeth me; He washeth me white in his precious blood; He openeth the door for my coming; He lighteth a lamp for my room; He buildeth a house for my occupancy; He will give me an eternal spring wherein to bloom and give fragrance. Nothing can pluck me out of His hands

—His pierced hands. I am sheltered in His heart and rescued by His redemption.

So I pray and praise, I love and laud, I find my prayer a psalm and chant it without aid of minstrel. God is my Song and my Triumph, my ground and my sky, my all and in all forevermore in Christ. Amen.

MR. FEARING'S PRAYER

(Of Pilgrim's Progress)

LORD, I hide my eyes behind my hands and my hands are dirty. I am all unworthy. I greatly fear. I hold deep desire to be Thine, but my heart is afraid, greatly afraid. I am afraid of Thee, O Lord. I have a desire to call Thee Father, but I cannot—no, I cannot. How dare I? I am so unfit. I am covered with the mud of the road. I ran from the City of Destruction but fell into the Slough of Despond. My garments are muddy, my face unclean, my hands grimy, my feet clogged with the mud. Sin, my sin, eats into my flesh like a canker. Thou canst not cleanse me nor accept me, nor love me, yet I want Thee. I want Thee so. My heart, my flesh, my feet, my hands, my sorrows, my failures, my sore besetments cry out for the living God; and yet I cannot think He hears me, or if He hears me that He heeds me. I fear and fret. Others have fear turned into favor and their fret turned into joy; but that is not for me. I am beset with my uncleanness. I am turned topsy-turvy at every mile of the road. I feel sure I cannot come to the Chamber called Peace. I cannot climb God's holy hill. That sweet mountain is not for such as I am, yet I want to climb that hill. If I were to try to cross the Jordan, its waters would all go over me. Nay, I know well I cannot cross that cold,

wide stream. Death affrights me; life affrights me; my brethren in the gospel affright me; Thou affrightest me. I am caught in wind and wave. Alas, O Lord, Thou seest I am undone and dismayed. My sin hath broken me till I cannot even limp toward Thee. The Saint's Everlasting Rest I must not come near it, and the company of the cleansed I would befoul. My Lord, the fountain of Cleansing is not for me—not for me. Thy favor is not for me, but for others. Thou hadst me not in Thy plan. Others are included. My sin, my sin! (And Mr. Fearing comes to the River of Death and cries:) O my Lord, my Lord, I bless Thee Thou art beside me to bear me up. I am not lost but saved. The blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth all my sins, so many, so very many, and this river which hath ever affrighted me is like bathing in a summer stream limpid as crystal, sweet as June, not a trace of death, only the River of Life—O my Lord, I thank Thee—hold me fast—I smile on Thy bosom—I am safe. Amen.

I NEED THE EVERLASTING MERCY

LORD, I profoundly bless Thee that Thy mercy endureth forever. I need the everlasting mercy. My wayward goings require the continuity of pardon accessible only at Thy throne of grace. I need the extreme unction of God, not at the hands of any man but at the heart of God. Mercy is not my desert, but mercy is my plea. I plead for daily, hourly, momently mercy. Not by desert can I inherit the kingdom of God. I know that. No one need tell me that. I do not need to pray for perception of my own inadequacy, my incongruity of behavior, for my sins are ever before me. Peccavi! Alas, my Lord! Thou knowest. The mighty Christ is my City of Refuge. Thither I

come with hot feet of haste. Absolve me from my sin, my Sinless Lord. Thou who didst no sin, mark my sins, but mark Thy hands for my absolution. Break Thy box of ointment on my head and my heart, so that sinful though I be, I may daily have the consciousness that I am forgiven and that I am in the holy family of my God in Christ. Amen.

I LIVE ON THE GROUND TOO MUCH

LORD, I am put to by many things. I am worried over trifles. There is no calm on my spirit. I am caught like the dust by the wind. I live on the ground too much. Little things stir the pool of my heart and fret it. I grow peevish, complaining, and talk much over discomforts.

Help me in my battle against this triviality of soul. The rain will lay the dust. The bitter things will soon be spent. The sour of life leaves no lasting flavor on the lip. All little muddiness of the journey is soon dried up. Why murmur I? Why waste life's fleeting moments in useless murmurings?

Forgive me, Good Father, and let me into the calm of Thy heart. That is my desired haven. Not restless, not shaken as a leaf by every passing wind, but calmly held in the hand of God where I rest and have unspeakable quiet. Help me, by staying near me, that Thy calm bless me with its abiding beatitude. Amen.

WHAT NEED I BUT THYSELF?

MY God and Father, I love to linger near Thy heart. What a good day every day is when God is close! What need I but Thyself? There

is positively no lack when Thou art near. I know that, when I consider. I do not consider I am so busy, so buzzy like a fly at a window pane. When I use my wings I think I fly when I only make a noise and become a nuisance.

Lord, keep me at my lesson; and my lesson is to learn to love God and to live in God. All other studies comparatively are ridiculous: they smell of varnish and new paint. My book, as I learn to peruse it on my knees, is the will of God. And what a strange, sweet, sublime book it is!

I want to be like God. O help me, help me. I should be able to hold to that study without heavenly help, seeing it is so trancing, so emboldening, so ennobling; but I cannot. The lesson is beyond me, except the real preceptor lean over my shoulder and with his guiding finger point along the line I ought to read.

So, Blessed Instructor in things high, authoritative, holy, stay with me all the lesson hours, so that at the day's conclusion Thou canst say, "Thou hast studied well to-day, my child. Good night." Amen.

I AM MENACED BY MYSELF

LORD, when I consider my ways and Thy ways my heart sinks like lead. I am brought very low. There is no hope to bring me either morning or twilight. My ways are so erring, so blind, so incompetent, so hesitant, so lacking in dream and consequence, so bordering on sin, so impure in my own eyes and more so in Thine eyes. Alas! my ways eat my heart out and drink the channels dry like a desert wind. Alack, alack! I am menaced by myself. I bleed like a soldier wounded to the death. The very pulse of me hushes. My ways are my undoing. When I match them with Thy ways, what is there for me but peril and

defeat and shame mantling my cheek and painting my soul red as a furnace fire.

Thy ways are past finding out or climbing, high and holy and straight. No meandering in the path of God, no loitering on the road God takes, no dallying on His ways, no valley roads, only highways and sure ways and right ways. Thy ways are my undoing, yet are they my health and renewing also.

I see them, and they are my courage. There are right ways. If mine grow arrogant and truculent, I can correct their distemper by appeal to Thy ways. I have been strayed or somnolent or wicked, but there are ways which are higher than my ways. My ways do not need to last. God's ways last, and have a right to last. They have eternity on their journey. They have heights and depths and glory and everlasting life alongside their far wanderings. They abide forever because they ought to abide forever. They endure being of enduring stuff. Nothing that makes a lie is used in their structure.

Wherefore in my disheartenment I am heartened. Thy ways are not made to undo me but to subdue me and enlighten me and enlarge me and direct me.

Wherefore, as in all my thoughts, when they steer for Thyself I am greatly helped and set on a right way which shall eventuate in the life eternal hard by the throne of God in Christ. Amen.

MY FRIENDSHIPS ARE WITH THE BLOOD-WASHED

MY soul rejoices in God, my Saviour, so that I cannot keep the song from my lips. I will not try, seeing praise is said to be comely

for the upright. It is in their company clad in white which no earth soil can blacken that I devoutly desire to stand. Every day I draw nearer the company of the redeemed and blood-washed and I would wish to have my friendships and conversation more and more with them. I belong to them by the deep passion of my heart. I want to be like God. Whatever wandering I make, my path is designed to come to God's holy hill and to make a sure headway toward His cross.

Lord, let me not in anywise miss of my destination. I pray Thee give me help hour by hour. I have no wish to make my bed in hell, nor do I wish to make my fellowships with hellish folk in the earth. Their conversation shames me, and their breath reeks of perdition; and I know by the shame I feel in their momentary presence that my alignments are surely with God. What He likes I like; what He loves, I love; where He stays is my habitation forever.

Wherefore, Heavenly Help, consider my weakness and minister to it strength, that the what I want to be I may be, and where I wish to go I may go, and that spotlessness of soul which is my deepest desire I may achieve and retain through the blood of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

THE CITY OF GOD

MY MASTER, sometimes my mind is burdened with the sense of the City of Destruction. I feel its hellish proximity, smell its chimney smoke stenched with sulphur fume, and see its mud on my sandals and up to my knees. I am filled with abhorrence and with alarm. The muck, the filth, the slow ooze of mire, the horrible rub-

bish heaps, the shame that is shameless—these be the City of Destruction which contaminates the air and my way. My soul loathes it but I feel it. How to be quit of it appears a task too arduous, overwhelming, disheartening, so as to dismay me and break all blitheness from my spirit.

Then on other days I feel the City of God not far removed but very near. I feel its supernal glories and hear its anthems swell upon the wind and see its white-robed inhabitants with harp and cymbals and palms and hear the raptures set to everlasting melody. A city where stability is assured, whose foundations no earthquake shock can any wise disquiet or imperil, since they rest on the Rock of Ages. Lord my God, confirm my kinship with the celestial. Make my kindredship to the eternal more apparent, and my kinship to the earthy a continually lessening compulsion, till on some heavenly day I cease mortality because mortality shall be swallowed up of life. I pray in the name of the Resurrection and the Life. Amen.

GOD MY WATCHGUARD

MY Great Watchman, I thank Thee for Thy watchguard. I am sleepy, tired, overwrought, seeing ghosts along the way; and I need some one who, watching, sees all and is not nervous nor affrighted. I need a Watch for my words. One who can muster the right word and silence the wrong word, who can invite my best words and can call them into valiant battle.

I need a Watch on my goings, Who sees the forwardgoing road, sees every danger, every lurking foe, and can send me on dangerous ways equal to every event and prepared for every emergency,

so that the surprise and defeat which so often gather about it may not be my portion.

I need a Watchman for my hungers, that they grovel not nor inhabit the murk not visited by the morning, that they stride out of doors, out under the sunlight where the winds and flowers and the fields invite into wideness and helpfulness and a song.

I pray Thee watch my thoughts. I want them winged to fly toward Thee. I want them to be like a swarm of heavenly bees which gather honey in all flowers honey-dewed in every season. Great Watchman, watch my thoughts.

Watch my deeds. Help me do the things which are opportune, and in unison with divine activity. My deeds need the watch care of God. They mean well but have not the wisdom they surely need. Wherefore, Great Watchman, I pray Thee watch my deeds. I want them to follow Thee as the flock follows the shepherd.

Watch, I pray, my heart, my sinful heart which would be sinless. Thou hast that secret, and no one besides has it. Watch my heart. I cannot. While I watch I miss the very thing against which I should guard. I need an eye which detects at a glance the things which ought not to be and those things which ought to be.

Great Heart of God, watch my heart and see it as it is and wash it with Thy blood to make it and to keep it clean, I ask in Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS OF ASPIRATION AND HOPE

I AM DAZED AS WOUNDED IN A GREAT FIGHT

LORD God, my Father, what time I lie like a broken spar tossed by a wintry wave upon a frozen shore, walk that bleak coast and find me ere I die.

I cannot go to Thee. Thou seest all the waters have gone over me and it is winter. I need Thee with a wide, wild need, I cannot utter. I need someone bigger than I in the stormy and wild sea. There is but One.

He is enough. The One who when the last extremity of life or death has caught us surlily by the hand to work us woe—the One who then is near. He needs not to be appealed to. I cannot speak. Thought lies water-logged in my brain and heart. I am dazed as wounded in a great fight.

The storm has ceased to sing to me as its wont has been (for have I not loved the storm, Thy storm, O my Captain?) and has harried me like an infernal wolfpack, only grim wolves tall as the hills and hungry as the sea. I am sheer spent. My case is desperate. I have ceased to bleed. My blood is drained. My voice has sunk below a whisper.

Then Thou comest, leanest low and dost hide me in Thy shelter!

Now, doubtless, O Lord, I shall live and not die,

and lift a voice dim as a forgotten dream, yet a living voice to Thee, the Lord of my life, the Lifter up of my head, the Rescuer of my soul; and Thou wilt give me a to-morrow with Thee, for which Hallelujah and Amen.

SPIRIT CALLS ME LIKE A TRUMPET

MY MASTER, I worship Thee, the Father of spirits. I am daily more interested in spirit and less concerned in bodies. I have a body but am a spirit. I shall have a body here, and as I believe a body in everlasting life, a glorious body when this earthly shall be changed and this mortal shall put on immortality.

The spirit that I am calls to me like a trumpet. "God is spirit" was what Christ told us one day in words that fill the world of heart this day. I am like God. His fashioning is on my selfhood. The boundless is on me not like the shadow of a cloud but like the heart in the oak.

The Father of my spirit is He to whom my spirit runs as to a fountain for the waters which slake the thirst put in it by its Maker.

I love Thee with my spirit; I serve Thee with my spirit; I wonder about Thee with my spirit; I follow hard after Thee with my spirit; I watch for Thee with my spirit as they watch for a new star who are star-gazers. I find Thou art the pasture where my spirit must feed if it would not go hungry into eternity and if it would not starve in time. My spirit pants for Thee. I am footsore with running after the Father of Spirits. As a little child runs after its father, my soul runs after my Father. I want His hand and His eyes and His heart and His wisdom. My spirit is hot-footed as the feet of a running army, only I am not at war, I am at love. I am a child of

deep and passionate desire for Him for Whom my being was made and in Whom only my nature can find solace, satisfaction, inspiration, emotion, glory.

I run to Thee, O Father. Hide me in Thy spiritual sky against the white light of Thyself and I shall no doubt be shot through by Thy glory and made marvelous by the inblaze of Thy spirit till I shall be like Thee. To this event help Thou me on, O Lord, my King and my Father and my God. Amen.

I HEAR IT OF THEE

WILT Thou always hear me when my need is great, and wilt Thou never weary of my approach?

I read it of Thee. I hear it of Thee. I myself know it of Thee. I have never found Thee to delay in listening to my call. How full of blessing that is! My needs rise on me like a sudden storm. I cannot prearrange for all my needs. I must meet what comes and when it comes, and the wisdom needed is not mine to supply. Where could I turn except I had Thee? I could have no recourse, but now I need no recourse save Thyself. When I call, there art Thou, as if wanting to be turned to. It is a sweet mothering way God has, never to seem to be troubled by our coming but only to seem troubled by our not coming.

When morning brightens my path, I may need Thee, for in days of comfort not less than in days of loss I have found my need of the living God. Distress is not so unmanning in spiritual things as days of rest and calm and leisure. Where I shall need Thee most I wot not, only I know I shall have Thee according to my need; and by its pressure of haste Thy swiftness of relief will be; I am panoplied for every hour, therefore, whatever that hour may be or whensoever it may arrive.

This great solace gives my heart a tireless peace. It calms my soul like the moonlight on untroubled waters.

I bless and love Thee and rest in Thee utterly in Christ. Amen.

WE MUST LEARN TO BE ASTONISHED

LORD, we bless Thee that Thou art Thou and we are we. Thou art Elder Brother unto us, but yet are we younger brothers unto Thee. We too are wonderful. We must learn to be astonished. Lead us into that holy hill where all things finite open out into the infinite. Nothing here is common. The wayside flower, the wayside hut, the playing children, the weeping women, the youth glad of the chance to be alive, the old man stooped with years, head as white as death, all are wonderful. Help me to know that.

Keep close to me so that while Thy naked hand rests lightly on my naked pulse, Thy sense of wonder my creep like a whisper along my listening pulse, and all things shall stand before my soul's eyes transfigured and fit to set to everlasting song. Hear me, O Christ. Amen.

LORD, THOU ART OUR WEALTH

LORD, our God, how very rich we are, possessing Thee. Thou art our wealth. We cannot feel poor, when among our possessions we have the Almighty, Everlasting, Everglowing God. If at any time we have fretted because we were poor in worldly goods, we humbly ask thy forgiveness. We knew not what we did. It was not worthy of us. We are too great to put a cash value on ourselves. We are Thy people. Thou art our God.

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Our money demands are temporary: our character demands are eternal. We are rich when for our lack God gives Himself.

We glorify God that He is our portion forever. So little worldly gear and gold suffice to meet our wants when day by day we have heavenly bread and heavenly help and heavenly solace and heavenly calm. Day by day we grow in riches eternal. We are growing our souls. God tends to that.

Can we be surly or peevish or unduly fearful when we are in God's hands and when God is in our hearts? We be Thy wealthy folks, O Lord, and so must school our hearts to consider our heavenly, eternal riches in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THOU HAST EVER BEEN GRACIOUS

PRAISES, praises, praises from the deep places of my heart I bring to Thee, the Lord of my life. Thou hast ever been gracious. Thou hast been never fitful with me nor swift to chide. Thou hast been gentle, aye, very gentle, gentle as a woman, firm as a soldier. "Slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." That assuredly is my case. I have found Thy ways so free from irritation or irritability, so unwavering in standard, Thou hast never changed Thy measuring rod. Thy yard has ever been a yard, no more, no less, and yet hast Thou been so in Thy beautiful consideration for the frame of me which was dust as that with the rigidity of moral demand there was elasticity in attitude toward me so that I have not had any sense of severity and only a sense of an unfathomable mercy, a grace fitting my need, and needed for my necessity, compassion infinite as the sky and

far-going like the march of the sun. How love I Thy mandates. How they give me wings. How they bear me onward, never backward.

For mercies which are everlasting, for a kindness which is enduring past the risings of the sun, for a compassion which rather weeps over me as over a lost Jerusalem than handles me grimly like the Judge Thou art, for a sternness which is tender and a tenderness which is stern I give Thee Thanks. Praises, and praises now and always, in Christ. Amen.

EVERY ONE OF MY WINDOWS OPENS TOWARD GOD

LORD, I always thank Thee. My life turns toward Thee as growing plants to the light. Thou art my light. Every one of my windows opens toward Thee. Thou art my Morning; and my heart haunts Thy east. I love to muse on Thee and sit at thought of Thy nature and grace. What happy quiet my heart enjoys considering how Thou art Center of all high things and that in nothing do I need to go away from Thee to get needed good.

I have watched the plants grow stoop-shouldered in their push for the light, wan tendrils in a cellar where the dark was oppressive and yet toward some crevice of light the cellar-born thing would lean and fairly cry with pain for the little light there was.

Lord, wouldst Thou sanctify that high parable of the lowly plant to my heart's high desire and furtherance? Bring me toward Thee, drawn by that light which fathers all other light so that my nature may climb Thy way and warm and thrive and grow radiant by the light of God where in eternity I am to hide my lesser splendor.

For this light and my leaning toward it and my yearning for it, I bless Thee all the day long and shall through all the days long. Amen.

A PRAYER OF PRAISE FOR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

PRECIOUS CHRIST, I bless Thee for Christian experience, for that radiant path which I have been shown by my God, for that green pasture where I have been shepherded. The proof of the heavenly matter is in staying with God. The tangles of thinking, the complexity of the system in which I found myself a citizen, all becomes a book printed in little words when I read all complexities in the light of Thy personal dealing with my soul. Christian experience I found to be a profound theologian. Thy ways are ways of pleasantness, that my soul knoweth right well when it considers God's residence in it. My theology becomes enlightened by Thy presence, Thy love, Thy amazing grace, Thy warming of my wintry heart. God has not withholden Himself from me. I have walked, prayed, played, groped, run, taken wings like a wild bird over broad valleys, all in His presence, all in His holding, all in His upholding, all in His peace unspeakable. All my thinking has been steadied by Thee in it. I have in all things had God not theoretical but personal and essential. Sometimes in cloudy weather, in rain, in rainless drought, in music in silent places, in calm, in windy weather, childlike trust in times that tried men's souls, because I have experienced God in Christ and Christ in God. I have had the Holy Spirit with His comfort so that I have known by heart why He is called THE COMFORTER. I have proven God Triune, and He has not failed, nor will. Blessed be my God forever. Amen.

BLESSED BE GOD, HE REIGNS

BLESSED be God that He is God and reigns. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." The old poet who said that was right, greatly, tranquilly right. No wonder he laughed out loud to the tune of trumpets. In the fall of many kings it needs the granite of the sovereign God to stabilize the soul.

Those who reigned, reign not now. Such as reign now know not what shall befall their tomorrow. Their crowns may fall from their brows and their scepters shake from their hands and their ermine and purple be flung in the mud of the street.

But One reigneth; He sits on a quiet and a steady throne. The earthly kings fall away like leaves when the hard frost comes, but our God sitteth quiet. His scepter reigneth over all.

We bless our God for this sense of steadfast quiet, for this permission for our hearts to beat the old undisturbed tune. The Lord reigneth. Rejoice, my soul. Take up thy harp. Smite swift music from its strings. The storms have a Master, and the mountains stand, and law for man shall still have its seat in the quiet heart of God. Our King, eternal, allwise, rules and will rule in Christ. Amen.

GOD IS MY HIGHLAND AND ADVENTUROUS SEA

MY GOD and Father, I thank Thee for the parable of Thee I find everywhere I look or go. When I have often wandered by wandering water and following the stream upward to its source, I have clambered and come into the hills or ofttimes into the mountains. There were ever

mountains at the far end of the great rivers. And if I wandered downward, I found the stream went singingly into a larger water course and that in turn into a larger yet, until at last—always at last—it eventuated in the ocean. Upward the stream heads in the mountain; outward the stream ends in the sea. The sky is the river's source; the sea is the river's destination.

So is this parable of Thee. Thou art the climbing hill, the lofty mountain, the fair, far sky, and Thou art the insistent and eventual sea. Toward Thee I climb; into Thee I flow. Thou art my Highland and Thou my Adventurous Sea. Thou art my Yesterday and Thou my Wistful To-morrow.

Wherefore I bless Thee Thou art Thou. It reads like a story written by the sky's hands or by the fingers of the sea. Thou art back there and Thou art out there. Whence I came and whither I haste, there art Thou, my God. Amen.

GOD WANTS ME AROUND

I HAVE access to God. Blessed be God for that wonder and help. It matters not who I am, I have access to God. He is anybody's God. How that quiets the pulse of the human race! A democratic God is our God. Everybody has a high place with him. We are not lowly folk, though we be lowly. We are the highly esteemed with God. We are His folks; His door is never shut to us. We need not even knock, though we may knock. We may run in unheralded. How blessed!

Children do not knock; children enter. The sweet mannerliness of children is to know their father wants them around, and near him at his heart. My Father, grant me that sense of Thee and of me that I enter boldly into Thy presence. Thou dost want me around. Thy fire is always

lit when I come, thy inglenook is where I am to sit and sing the evening through. I must not falter when I come before Thee, I do not presume when I make my prayer or have my trust in the living, loving God.

I have access. Thou art accessible at every hour, any hour, in every need, with every trouble, in all success. "Come, child," says my God, "thou canst never bother me, I am Thy Father. Come unto me and I will give you rest." Amen.

THE REDOLENCE OF PRAYER

MY HEAVENLY FATHER, teach me about prayer. I do not ask its philosophy. I want its redolence, its sanctification, its purification by blood, whatsoever prayer is. Teach me resignation to Thy will, eagerness to find Thy purposes, and passion to work them out, purity of soul which makes God's whisper outsound stormy waves, simplicity which keeps a child's heart in a man's behavior, frankness with God, no quibbling, no legerdemain on my part, only a sane and wholesome confidence and federation of my will with Thee, so I may know Thy will and do Thy work.

Lord, teach me how to pray. Amen.

LORD, I PRAY FOR ISOLATION

LORD, isolate us from our business world, our pleasure world, our social world, our world of obligation, and put us in some solitary place with Thee.

Impress us with the great eternal things—that life is brief; character is sure; destiny is certain; that we cannot escape ourselves; that we are

making the immortalities by which we are to abide forever.

May our lives be strengthened and lifted up—and lost in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LET ME GRIP GOD'S HAND

LORD, teach me how to pray. I want the life of prayer. Life is my word. I want not the thought of prayer, though that is rarely beautiful. I want the life of prayer, the saps that run through all the trunk and branch and leaf and hinted bud. Let me grip the divine vitality. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," I quite believe. Invite me out to those vitalities. Give me not fine phrases but sinewy life. Let me wait on the Lord. Let me adore Thee. Let me step into acquiescence with the divine will as rivers hold along their channels. Let me grip God's hand. Let me know that I am made by prayer more than I make a prayer. May I not only ask of Thee but engage in Thee. Thou art my supreme endeavor. I must get in God if I shall rise into largeness of resource of power which may be called out at any moment like an armed troop.

Give Thyself grip on my soul. May I be swift to approach Thee, slow to leave Thee, glad to serve Thee, neighborly with Thee, great by Thee, resourceful in Thee, bringing my life to head in Thee as a stream does in the loftiest height, to the end that my life may ultimately be, in Christ what God would consider a prayer. Amen.

I WING TO THEE

LORD, I will not fret though the day be cold and the landscape barren and the winds wild. I am not their child. I am Thy child. I belong

not to the elements but to God. I shiver along the ways, but not as one who mopes and moans, but as one to whom all weathers are subsidiary and for whom all things whatsoever hold salutations and service.

I am so grateful for this ruddy sense of life, which no fatigue can weary nor any humdrums make despondent. I am safe and well and strong and radiant in Thee.

If my flesh fail, my heart shall not fail: and my heart is myself. My flesh—well, it shall see God. So much for that tiring apparel of my soul. Weariness, fatigue is but for a night, and the rest cometh at the morning. I am of the morning and for the morning, and all's well. However things go, all's well; I climb to Thee.

I wing to Thee, mine expectation is in the God of my rejoicing and my strength.

Thanks be to God all days, all wheres. Amen.

OUR ENTIRETY OF SOUL WORSHIPS GOD

OUR FATHER which art in heaven, we bow before Thee with our hearts and with our minds. Our entirety of soul worships the living and the loving and the ruling God. His name dispels our daily fears; His hand wipes away our daily tears; His love banishes our fearful lookings forward toward days we know not of; His grace is our undespair and our exceeding great and buoyant hope; His confidence in us is our continuous invitation to struggle toward being the better things we have not been as yet; His heart is a haven of refuge, which we are able by experience and in experience to reach day or night; His commands put our feet on the way everlasting; His judgments are to me righteous altogether;

His presence is peace and plenty; and by his admonitions our lives proceed without perturbation along a highway which Himself has cast up for the feet of the redeemed; and His commendation is like the morning, and our feet as hind's feet on the dew-wet hills.

Lord, we worship, and shall not cease that high exercise while eternity endures. Hear our oblation and forget not Thy servants who bring it, we pray in our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Lord of all. Amen.

I SHALL ARRIVE

LORD, I bless Thee for the many windows in Thy word. Thy Book is the house of many windows so that wherever anybody stands he may look out and up and see visions. I read to-day how a holy man who was looking out saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem. It was a fair sight and very heartening to one of whom it might justly be said he had no continuing city. No city here but a city there, and four-square and wonderlit. Passengers be we here and residents be we there. The journey over but the quest just begun, thank God. We are ever on the road to that large thing the length and the breadth whereof no man knoweth. We shall dwell somewhere. There shall be no call to move out. We shall have arrived. "I shall arrive," as said the great Browning, and no doubt of it. I feel sure since the living and the loving God has let one man see where we were coming to the Holy City. Ah, bless God for the sight of it. I have wandered from place to place the years of my lifetime and have had no continuing city, and now here is where I am to live. Not a mover in and a mover out for always; but some day, when the signs are right with my soul, I shall move into an abiding city, my abid-

ing city. And I mind me now how I have so many beloveds in that sure metropolis. They go the winding ways that lead along the crystal river, and they walk the meadow lands within the city precincts where there is room and to spare.

Ah, my Master, I love Thee, as I think of how out of a window in Thy Holy Book I may look and see the things which last and the place of my rest and of the rest of those I love, the city which hath foundation whose builder and maker is God. That is my city, my perennial habitation. How fair it shineth to my heart under the sun or under the moon! I see its settled glory and its steeples high against the sky, and hear at starry silences the ringing of its Sabbath bells.

My God, keep me facing the way that city lieth. Keep my heart eager for those Sabbath bells and for that chiming. Keep my heart clean so I may have good welcome to the city of the cleansed. All help is Thine; all need is mine. I stay with Thee, for thus my all of need has Thy all of help and I shall come in due course to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, where dwelleth my Saviour, in whose name and love I make my many prayers. Amen.

A BRAVE INFERENCE

LORD, my God, I would come nigh unto Thee and worship. I feel Thee and mayhap Thou feelest me. Is it not so? Have I not weight and magnitude with God? What a great brave inference that is! God feels my tug of gravitation. I am a little sphere, yet am I a sphere, and set in the divine astronomy. I am astral. I emit light. I have intrinsic glow and glory. My light is not as the firefly light, under its wings and on its surface. My light is as the light of the sun,

From within I shine. I do not make light. It is not a dynamo splendor. I am light. Should I have guessed this astonishment? Never, my Lord. I had been far from guessing a guess so high. It is not in me to go so far and high. Christ told it to me and to all my brothers and sisters in the Christ.

"I am the light of the world," He said, and then "Ye are the light of the world," He said, which things seen deeply were not contradictory but elucidative. He is my source. He is all flame of white light. I am flame of white light what time I let my larger selfhood shine out. To abide in Him is therefore my chief wisdom and my surest sagacity. His light shines out of me and folks say it is morning when we thought it was night. It is night, and yet it is morning, for the light of God, whether shining directly from God or indirectly through me from God, such light makes morning whatever hour of the night it shines. I am fairly drenched with this glory of what God has done in me and will do for me, and for my dimensions in His sight, and my luminosity, mine by His grace and for His glory in Christ. Amen.

GOOD TALK BETWEEN US AND GOD

LORD, I bless Thee that each day when I turn to the pages of Thy dear Book I find some first-glance passage which gives me wings for the whole day through. I lit this morning, on opening the Book, on "And the king shall answer." That is it. The King shall answer, and He shall answer me. I shall have converse with the King. He shall not be so busy that He cannot take a minute to talk with me. I need not take up a theme of necessity. He will take up some theme with me one day, and on another day I shall take

up a theme with Him. We shall have good talk between us coming and going. There will always be talk and plenty when we go walking together, my King and I. No lack of themes for conversation. He will have some turn of thought for my mind, He will open up some avenue whose far end will enter the boundless glory. Good talks are to be had in such a universe as God has set us in. "The King shall answer." Ah me, may His answer be like dew on my heart. May it be approval and not reproval, howbeit I need God's reproof, so lest I be careful I shall desire what is not best for my soul.

Lord, this day and all days take up such conversation with me as shall be salutary to my endless life. Reprove, exhort, be angry, be severe, speak with the thunder or the lightning's cut or with the gentle drip of the timely rain; but use Thy wisdom. Speak with speech needful for me. Break me on Thy wheel or blow on me with Thy evening wind, as is for my best. I leave me with Thee. Only answer me, O Lord, and it shall suffice in Christ. Amen.

I DOUBT NOT I AM GOD'S CONTINENT

LORD, I am like an island in a far-sweeping ocean. I doubt not I am God's continent. His far rush of seas where islands hide and where for dim centuries two lordly continents were tucked away in the folds of His garments, those seas have no such continents as are men. They are his continental possessions. It is wonderful to think how God has made us special magnitudes. Nothing of land and mountain and far reach of farmed field compels God's consideration. A few stars more or less to Him are nothing at all. He has so many stars, and if any were lost. He

could speak and more stars should leap into the night to shine. But God makes not man by fiat. Stars are dimming things which will sooner or later burn out, but man is an everlasting somewhat. He, once made, enters into the eternal fiber of things. He becomes a light, a shining or a shadow or a blackness, but he is to be reckoned with for eternity and in eternity. Am I not, then, continental? Have I not proportions which are really huge as Jupiter? Have I not on my continent long, winding sea ways and bays and harbors and deep cliffs, at whose feet the waters surge and cannot sleep, and on whose mountain heights the mornings hurry to arrive and linger from departing, and valleys where villages sing and children play and men and women work, and where the things of which history is made are daily done, and all the regalities are daily doings though such as do them know it not? Lord, I bless Thee. My heart burns like a burning mountain. I worship God Who has made me of such esteem. Lord God, I worship and bow down for this exulting in Christ. Amen.

IT IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE WITH GOD

LORD of my life and hope and song, I bring Thee morning love and praise. It is good to be alive with Thee. Work is sweet, since it is work with Thee and for Thee and for the world Thou hast ordained. I will work unto the Lord as I will sing unto the Lord. My work may be an exultant praise to Thee. What timely and wholesome and heartening view of work this is! How good it is to be a laborer when such is a laboring man's relation to the Lord of labor. I have sweet rest in my most taxing endeavors just because I feel Thou art delighted in my day's work. I am

side by side with men and God in walking down this field and reaping this grain. Together with God we sow and together with God we reap and with Him garner and with Him lift the harvest song.

Give me the harvest moon, gold-red, and in the early evening and low-lying against the hills of the plain, and the crickets' call through the gathering dark. All day at work with God and all night asleep under the tented silence of his gentle dark and then to wake with Him for another day of life at work or to wake with Him for the everlasting day of work with Him in His eternity. Blessed be God for these unspeakable gifts whereby life hath boundless exaltation every day it lives. In Christ. Amen.

MY DAY IS A MYSTERY TO ME

LORD, my God, I bless Thee that Thou hast a plan for my life. What it is I do not know. I must wait and find out. My day is a mystery to me. Howbeit not to Thee. I am not set here like a nestless bird to shiver in the wintry wind. I am planned for. A career is mapped out to me and for me by my God. I pray I make no shipwreck of Thy plan. I pray this prayer night and day, day and night. I so greatly need to company with God's suggestions. He holds my chart; He owns my sea; He is my ship; I cannot afford to deny my chart, my sea, my ship. How shall I voyage if I deny these? I cannot. Yet I fear, knowing my wickedness and my unwisdom, that I may. I have. I may again. God help me not to defy my own high destiny. I want to know God's plan and do it. I pray that I may not frustrate the grace of God. What sheer iniquity that would be. God's grace is not my desert but my belong-

ing. Grace is free, all free, therefore, mine, all mine. Thy plan for me, O Lord, let me walk toward it. It is a high plan, I know, for Thou hast no others for anybody. I may be one of Thy necessary men if I will walk orderly and humbly and purely. It is so I deeply desire to walk. Give me grace and then give me more grace. If I walk with Thee, I shall find a footpath to all Thy design in me. How wholesome and heartening a thought that is! I do not go blindly although I am a child of mystery. I am a child of Providence. The wild birds are not so dear to Thee as I, and Thou hast all times guided them. Thou guidest them in the dark; they fly in the night and are not lost, but reach their nest place in their summer with their nestlings in the rushes by the stream.

So, God of my heart, guide me into Thy plan for me so that I come into my summer weather and my summer growth and my summer song. "Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah." Amen.

AGAINST ETERNITY

LORD, I pray to be rooted in God. Earth is a too shallow soil for the deep droughts that afflict the world. I must get my roots sunk to the living waters. I must have soil deep as the Mississippi and Amazon loam—aye, deeper, for the great alluvial plains grow only forests that die in the to-morrow of the years, whereas I am to grow and give shadow against eternity—against eternity! I must not root in shallow soil, for that wild winter blast called death will uproot me like a shallow-rooted pine. But rooted in God I can defy all tempests. Life nor death knows any skill which shall do other than make music in my topmost branches if I abide rooted in God.

I feel so sure of myself, so rooted, and the saps of an eternal growth run glad along my veins till on some morning or evening I feel the raptures of an everlasting life. "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks," it matters not to me, for my roots sink deep and sure into the Everlasting God. Amen.

LORD, KEEP ME FROM BEING PEEVISH

LORD, keep me from being peevish. Keep me from petty thought and petty ways. May I keep in the large and to the large. May the gnats not make me nervous and jumpy and hard to get along with. Help me. Keep me from uncouth speech or fret over trivialities. Let small things not take the chair at the head of my table. Keep me big and true because I am thy son in Christ. Amen.

THE CHORAL GLORY

"TO the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent" (Psa. 30. 12).

Truly, my God, I would have glory sing praises unto Thee. Not my glory—that is too meager. Those translators who wrote "my" into this holy, exultant song were nearsighted for once. This is no diminutive affair; this is an affair of eternity and of the million, million of voices. My soul is to be only one member of an exceeding great chorus. This is a choral glory. Angels, archangels, cherubim, redeemed in the blood of the Lamb—a company beyond an arithmetic to count, the saints, Thy saints, and the voice of wind, of waves, of dayspring, of minstrel star, of bird, of insect, of cricket chir, of bees' droon, of frog-call through the long spring nights, of chiming bells

and floods that clap their hands, of ages, minutes, years and eternity—that glory, wasteless as eternity and measureless as God—that glory would I invoke for my heart to praise Thee with.

I am a poor minstrel. My voice is coarse and harsh and sometimes susurrant—a poor, untutored voice and music. I want the glory voices to spill melody upon the air to Thee, the Lord of all living and all that have lived and all that shall live. I know Thee who Thou art. Thou art the everlasting King. Let my glory awake! Truly I will, but 'tis such a trivial glory. Yet I will not hush it. Rather will I replenish it with music poured from all ecstasies of things Thou hast made. My sparrow note shall make a part in this festival of praises. Thou canst detect my quavering note nor wilt Thou reject it. Thou art good. Thou wilt not discard my poor treble.

Glory, awake. Shake music from Thy purple wings. God, my God, pour nard upon his feet and pour laughter on his hands. All glory stand erect, full-throated as the storm, and pour forth a hallelujah chorus to the King of Glory. Glory be to Thee, Most High. Amen and Amen.

I WANT TO TRAFFIC IN ETERNITIES

LORD, am I not Thy servant? If not, whose am I? I vouch my heart would not serve the devil nor temporality nor fleshly lust nor frivolities which vanish as the frost. I am inflexible in my intent against them. They sin against my sense of largeness, service, fineness, immortality. Am I my own servant? If so, show it to me, my Lord. I would not be. I am too small to let my service be to myself. I want to engage my powers in a far venture. I want lordly merchandise on my wharves. I want to traffic in eternities. I

will not engage myself to myself. Thou art the Majesty I want to serve. Bear me witness, O my God, that however far short I come, I desire utterly to belong to God. If I follow afar off as one Peter did, yet am I following and following Thee. Bring me nearer. Bid me walk faster; or wilt Thou walk slower? I think it of Thee. The High and Mighty One who considers sparrows and gives the bird a burial will not go on and leave me. Fathers shorten their steps for their little sons. Am I not Thy little son?

As I know myself, I long to love Thee. I want Thee. All besides are like withered leaves. Thou art my Lord, Master, Saviour. Hallowed be Thy name. Amen.

A WHISPER WILL COMMAND GOD

BLESSED be God, that there is always strength for the day. Whatever the day may be, and how strenuous soever, and however shot through with cares and fears and pains and half-despair, strength is always near. A whisper will command it; a tear will bring it near; a sigh will cover our lives with a whole sky of gain. As my day, so has my strength been, because Everlasting Strength was my portion and will be forever. Amen.

I NEED THEE IN MY LOVES

LORD of love, I need Thee in my loves. I feel love is of sea-depth and is full of darkness and fear as well as of wonder except that deepest depth of me be owned of God. I want the infinite Love to qualify my finite love, I want to have in myself that love divine to qualify all the love I shall ever possess. My little intellectual poten-

cies are not I at my greatness. My real self is my love life.

How many go wrong through love, into loss through love, into shameless hell through love! Wherefore I know I must have the love of God to greatly qualify my love, redeem it, sanctify it. God-life is love-life. May it be so that when my sea breadth and sea-depth have their play, they may reach God and bring their traffic to the feet of Him where all right merchandise must at the last discharge itself.

Love divine, mark my love, perfect it, purify it, and eventually glorify it. Amen.

AN EASTER BREATHING

LORD, grant me a place on Thy Holy Hill. I want to be there. Thou art there, and I want to be near Thee. Thy cross is there and an empty grave all choked with Easter lilies. An angel is seated on the stone haughty Roman Pilate put to insure the Christ should stay in that rigorous sepulcher, not witting that there was a higher power abroad than Cæsar's power. And an earthquake broke the seal, and an angel, weary with flight, is seated resting there. And it is Easter Day.

Let me find my habitation here where my *Credo* dwells and my illustrious hopes and my profoundest loves. Thy Holy Hill, may it be mine in Christ. Amen.

TRUST IN SOUL HUNGER

LORD of my soul, I pray Thee for a trust in my soul hunger. Help me to follow my deeper hunger. As the wee babe not knowing it has a mother yet presses to the maternal breast

and thereby obtains sustenance, so may my soul blindly follow its blind hungers which yet are not sleepy-eyed nor blind but filled with a divine wistfulness. I may not adequately reason God out, but my soul hunger after God is yet sufficient. The feet of life surely and safely tend to espouse the climb to the hill-lands of God. May my feet gladly take to the ascent. If I may not with my brain have access to God, may I by my bare feet climb to Him. My dim longings are on my spirit. My espousals are to God. My feet on the ground are my invitation to try my wings. Teach me to give assent to my undertow—to the swift blind drift and tug of soul that would bring me out to the wide and lordly sea. My blindness becomes not blind but full of eyes which will bring my soul and body to God, my King. Amen.

RELYING ON GOD'S PROVIDENCE

LORD, how sweetly and restfully I rely on Thy providence. The Carer for the sparrows will scarcely forget my daily needs, nor consider me beneath His holy care. I greatly thank Thee for the words Jesus spake on the sparrow's God. I need it. This wide world needs it. So vast the universe that we are in mortal danger of being trampled under foot of it. So do the scientists talk about how great the universe and how little our trivial sphere amidst it; and all this way of thinking and talking smothers the soul, till it chokes, cannot breathe, fights for air and gets but little, when in comes Christ, fresh from Thee and Who Himself is God, to say, "Fear not. The universe is very great, but the God of the universe is very much greater, and He taketh up isles and stars as a very little thing. He is not lost in His universe nor overpowered by it, and we,

His children, are not lost nor outbulked in His universe. The greatness of God so exceeds the greatness of created things that everything is open before His eyes; and babes, their mothers, and their fathers are significant, loved, redeemed by the God and the Father in Jesus Christ."

Blessed be our God for such a God as is revealed in Jesus Christ.

"Providence" comes to be a momentous word in soul-vocabulary since Jesus spoke it.

So, little though I am, only one among multi-millions, my Father knows me, sees me, waits for me as mothers for their sons to return from war, shapes things to my help, brings angels to my consolation, God to my cleansing, and I trust in His providence. No wind shall blow the dust away where I lie buried. God will care for my dust as He will care for my spirit and "in my flesh shall I see God." Blessed be God Who setteth me in the center of His great heart now and forevermore. Amen.

NO WAVERING WITH GOD

I BLESS my God for His settled purpose. There is no wavering with God. He is bent on certain brave designs from which there is no deflection. "No variableness nor shadow of turning"—how I love that sublime clause in the sentence God writes!

Our purposes vary so. They veer like the whimsical winds. They wander like a tortuous stream. They shuffle like frozen feet. Meantime, the inflexible purpose of God drives on. Men think to deflect it and then, men die with their little jest vanished before them. Foolish men have thought they broke the plan of God—and then they were not; and God stayed, and His

majestic plan, unswerving as a planet's course, rode on in triumph.

Lord, I need that lesson. May I pore over it as a schoolboy over his sums at school. The unswerving God is the One my brain needs to consider and my heart needs to adore. His purpose from which nothing can swerve Him is to bless the world and heal its grievous wounds by bringing it cleansing and justice and peace through the mighty and availing Christ. Amen.

I RESIDE AT THY FEET

LORD CHRIST, my Saviour, I reside at Thy feet. When I journey I pitch my moving tent at night at thy feet. When I build me a cottage I build it in Thy neighborhood. If I wander in "some boundless contiguity of shade," I find Thy footprints where Thy feet have trod. O it is wonderful to my heart, wonderful! I cannot stay my wonder and gratitude. Why should I? I do not walk where there is a wilderness. Some One has been before me—always Some One before me. I thought I was a pioneer; and lo, where I thought to plant my banner of surprise and discovery I found the crimson footprint of Christ-God. What doth he here? Nay, not that question; rather, "What do I here?" This is His landscape, His forest, His field, plowed and sowed, His prairie, His sea, His world. I have been conceited too long and have been an egotist talking about "my world," "my town," "my residence." I did not watch for the footprints of God, whose all these things surely are. Crusoe thought himself to be sole occupant of his island, when lo, he saw the print of a naked foot, and was thereafter afraid, expectant.

I am neighbor to a larger matter. The foot-

prints I behold are the footprints of God—man. The Owner has been here out in His garden; the Mountaineer has been out climbing His sunrise hill; the Farmer has been out on His farm; the Minister has been out to His church, and His footprints are everywhere. If I use my eyes, and I will watch for the loving footprints, they will guide me home. I will watch them and they will bring me where folks need help and balm and a watcher through the night; and if I will follow them, they will bring me to the shipwreck where I may rise to the lordliness of rescue. I pray Thee, my Lord and Saviour, show me Thy footprints, and on that footpath shall my soul find labor, excellency, worth, ownership and peace in Christ. Amen.

A PREACHER'S PRAYER

FATHER IN HEAVEN, hallowed be Thy name. Blessed be Thy name all times, all wheres. I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I bare my heart to His inspection.

I am one of Thy voices, am one of Thy saved men and sent men—sent to preach! Thou hast bidden me preach Thy Good News. Thy mandate is on my heart and on my lips. By Thy Command am I evangelist. I am to love the world, and proclaim to it Christ, the Only Begotten. Because of what Thou hast sent me to do I am of consequence. Eternity is part of my parish. I am soliciting colonists for Thy Holy City. My heart is strangely warmed by Thy companionship along all ways. I have God for my friend, my intimate friend.

I want to be a good minister of Jesus Christ. I want to be a good man. God help me. I want to have and keep the clean heart: I want to live

the undefiled life: I want to be a friend of every good thing: I want to make men and women dream high dreams that shall flash on golden wings up and back behind the stars: I want to make religion beautiful, majestical and inviting to manhood, both by how I preach it and by how I live it. I want to be tender as a woman and chaste as a child but robust as a soldier who endures long fatigues of march and battle and heeds them not. I want to be what Thou needest I should be, seeing who I am by Thy calling and Thy grace.

Lord Christ, God the Father, God the Spirit, if ever Thou didst help Thy weak ministers, help me: I am Thy least man, proficient only in incompetency. I need Thy holy and competent help. Help me through all days.

May I know how to teach so that the flock of Christ may be edified: may I know how to preach so that lonely and lost and befogged and aspiring —all sorts and conditions of men may get sight of the glory of God and cry out for the life of God. May my ministry make God engaging and alluring as a loving hand beckoning us home at evening.

Make me holily ambitious to do good and to help those for whom Christ bravely died. May many be led to the Saviour and be kept with the Saviour by my ministry. Make me sufficient for the high things for which I am myself insufficient. May I show little children the Christ: may I love to know my flock like the Great Shepherd knows His, and call my sheep by name, and lead them out.

Grant me Thy grace and help, without which I shall utterly fail and though I falter in my task as being a weak and inefficient man, yet seeing my vocation is of God may I be greatly girded for the largest endeavors, I humbly pray in the name of the availing Christ. Amen.

GOD'S OBITUARY

SOME agnostic wrote with a hideous sadness, "The Great Companion is dead." Thank God, he lied. As saintly John would have said, He lied and knew not the truth.

Small wonder that agnostic's words were wet with tears, hopeless tears. It is all that is needed to break the heart—"The Great Companion is dead." In what lying chronicle saw that man that obituary notice? Not in the chronicle of the skies. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Not in the sea. "The sea is his, and he made it." Not in the wandering birds, for they are all cared for, fed, clothed, buried by the living God. Not in man of whom God is still mindful. Not in matter which still demands the presence of the mighty and authorizing God to hold it consonant with His purpose which is theirs. Not in soul which feels its way toward God as the babe to the breast of its mother. This agnostic should read the eternal characters and then assuage his grief and put a period to his agnostic vaticinations which have no lamp in any room of the heart.

Thank God, millions of happy Christians know that the Great Companion is not dead, but is alive forevermore and very full of comfort and companionship, for which souls of the comforted give endless praises in Christ, Lord of Life and Prince of Resurrection. Amen.

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